

ON THE *CALLE DEL OLVIDO*:
MEMORY AND FORGETTING IN POST-PEACE PUBLIC DISCOURSE IN
GUATEMALA AND EL SALVADOR

A Thesis Submitted to the
College of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of History
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon

BY RACHEL HATCHER

PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree from the University of Saskatchewan, I agree that the libraries of this University may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor or professors who supervised my thesis work or, in their absence, by the department Head of the Department or the Dean of the College in which my thesis work was done. It is understood that any copy or publication use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of Saskatchewan in any use which may be made of any material in my thesis.

ABSTRACT

For many years, El Salvador and Guatemala were submerged in brutal and bloody conflicts that cost the lives of tens of thousands. United Nations-brokered Peace Accords officially brought the years of violence to an end in 1992 and 1996, respectively. As the two countries slowly emerged from their respective Cold War-inspired internal conflicts, the question of what place the past would have in the present came to the fore. This dissertation explores the way past violence is talked about in the public sphere. It analyzes post-Peace Accords public discourse in both countries, with a particular focus on the issues of memory, forgetting, truth, reconciliation, and related terms. It examines the different tasks memory and truth were assigned in the Peace Accords, especially in relation to the truth/truth-like commissions created out of those accords, and in the years since, and looks at the language those who reject memory and truth use to oppose them.

This dissertation argues that a common discursive framework exists in Guatemala that dictates that all sectors must insist on the importance of remembering the violence to prevent repetition. This is the human rights community's discourse, but it is one which even conservatives who wish for forgetting must repeat. Conservatives can only promote forgetting within the limits of this discursive framework, and they do so by talking about amnesty, *perdón* (pardon/forgiveness), and reconciliation. The situation in El Salvador is different. There is no common discursive framework that demands memory to prevent repetition and promote reconciliation. Rather than this, conservatives openly insist on amnesty and amnesia, while the human rights community insists on truth and memory. The discursive battle between forgetting and truth is El Salvador's discursive framework. Yet talking about memory, truth, reconciliation, and related topics leaves space to promote different truths, memories, or narratives of the past. This, indeed, is precisely what happens in both countries as different sectors actively promote their own truth, memory, or narrative, especially at moments of rupture or when their truth or discourse is challenged, as in 2012 when Salvadoran president Mauricio Funes asked for *perdón* for the El Mozote massacre and during Guatemala's 2013 genocide trial.

Running throughout the discussion about discourse and discursive frameworks is a critique of the insistence on the existence of one truth, memory, or narrative of the past. This is the foundation on which truth and truth-like commissions are built. Yet rather than focusing on

the truth of the past, this dissertation argues that the process of openly talking about the past and sharing truths and experiences will do more to contribute to reconciliation and non-repetition than insisting that there is and can only be one truth and that everyone must embrace it.

AGRADECIMIENTOS

Writing is a solitary endeavor; nevertheless, this could not have been written without many, many other people. So thank you to those other people.

A todas y todos en El Salvador y Guatemala que me ofrecieron su tiempo, gracias por compartir su conocimiento, sus tristezas y sus opiniones.

Dr Jim Handy, for your endless support and comments on rambling and overly long emails and drafts.

Drs Simonne Horwitz, Mark Meyers, Matthew Neufeld, and Kalowatie Deonondan, for asking difficult questions.

Dr Diane Nelson, for your thoughtful and thought-provoking comments, and for traveling all the way to Saskatoon to share them.

Emily and Kelsey, for our early morning talks about genocide.

Enrique, for our occasional coffee outings and conversations.

Manolo, for your friendship, enthusiasm, and encouragement.

Ferrán, gracies per deixar-me ser la fulla i a cops el riu.

Patrick, Erin, Kelly, Carla, Michael, and Marie-Christine, for our short, medium, and long talks about nothing, something, and everything in between.

Cedric, for everything, most of all for letting me become a doctor first.

Francisco, pour les 25 000 kilomètres que tu as parcourus.

My family, for never letting me be homeless.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TRANSLATIONS AND ACRONYMS	vi
INTRODUCTION: ON THE <i>CALLE DEL OLVIDO</i>	1
CHAPTER ONE: THEORY	42
CHAPTER TWO: GUATEMALA: SCHIZOPHRENIC MEMORY	75
CHAPTER THREE: GUATEMALA: <i>NUNCA MÁS</i>	101
CHAPTER FOUR: EL SALVADOR: <i>VERDAD</i> OR <i>OLVIDO</i>	130
CHAPTER FIVE: EL SALVADOR: MEMORY/HISTORICAL MEMORY/TRUTH/HISTORY	157
CHAPTER SIX: EL SALVADOR AND GUATEMALA: CONTESTED DISCOURSE	186
CHAPTER SEVEN: EL SALVADOR AND GUATEMALA: THE TWO BURIALS OF EL SALVADOR'S DEAD, AND UNBURYING GUATEMALA'S	218
CONCLUSION: THE POWER OF DISCOURSE	241
NOTE ON SOURCES	246
BIBLIOGRAPHY	247

TRANSLATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Acción Católica	Catholic Action
ACI	Alianza contra la Impunidad (Alliance against Impunity)
AHPN	Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional (Historic Archive of the National Police)
ARENA	Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (Nationalist Republican Alliance)
ARPAS	Asociación de Radios y Programas Participativos de El Salvador (Association of Radio and Participatory Programs of El Salvador)
ASC	Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil (Civil Society Assembly)
AVANCSO	Asociación para el Avance de las Ciencias Sociales en Guatemala (Association for the Advance of the Social Sciences in Guatemala)
Avemilgua	Asociación de Veteranos Militares de Guatemala (Association of Military Veterans of Guatemala)
BIRI	Batallón de Infantería de Reacción Inmediata (Immediate Reaction Infantry Battalion)
CACIF	Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras (Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial, and Financial Associations)
CAFCA	Centro de Análisis Forense y Ciencias Aplicadas (Center for Forensic Analysis and Applied Sciences)
CALDH	Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos (Center for Legal Action in Human Rights)
CC	Corte de Constitucionalidad (Constitutional Court)
CDHES	Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador (Human Rights Commission of El Salvador)
CDHG	Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala (Human Rights Commission of Guatemala)
CEBs	Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (Christian Base Communities)
CEDIM	Centro de Documentación e Investigación Maya (Center for Maya Documentation and Investigation)
CEG	Conferencia Episcopal de Guatemala (Bishop's Conference of Guatemala)

CEH	Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico (Historical Clarification Commission)
CEPAZ	Asociación Centro de Paz (Center of Peace Association)
CESPAD	Centro de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho (Center of Studies for the Application of Law)
CGP	Cámara Guatemalteca de Periodismo (Guatemalan Chamber of Journalism)
CGTC	Central General de Trabajadores de Guatemala (General Confederation of Workers of Guatemala)
CICIACS	Comisión de Investigación de Cuerpos Ilegales y Aparatos Clandestinos de Seguridad (Commission for the Investigation of Clandestine Groups and Illegal Armed Organizations)
CICIG	Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Guatemala (International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala)
CIDH	Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (Inter-American Human Rights Court)
CIIDH	Centro Internacional para Investigaciones en Derechos Humanos (International Center for Human Rights Research)
CIPED	Asociación Intersectorial para el Desarrollo Económico y el Progreso Social (Intersectoral Association for Economic Development and Social Progress)
CNEM	Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya (National Council on Mayan Education)
Coena	Consejo Ejecutivo Nacional (National Executive Council)
Co-Madres	Comité de Madres y Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos y Asesinados Políticos de El Salvador "Monseñor Óscar Arnulfo Romero" (Committee of Mothers and Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared and Political Victims "Monseñor Óscar Arnulfo Romero")
CODEFAM	Comité de Familiares de Víctimas de Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos "Marianella García Villas" (Committee of Relatives of Victims of Human Rights Violations "Marianella García Villas")
COMAFAC	Comite de Madres y Familiares Cristianos de Presos, Desaparecidos, y Asesinados (Christian Committee of Mother and Relatives of Prisoners, the Disappeared, and Assassinated)

Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador	(Truth Commission for El Salvador)
Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos	(Inter-American Human Rights Commission)
Comisión Interinstitucional de Búsqueda de Niños y Niñas Desaparecidos a Consecuencia del Conflicto Armado en El Salvador	(Interinstitutional Search Commission for Boys and Girls who Disappeared as a Result of the Armed Conflict in El Salvador)
Comisión Nacional de Búsqueda de Niños y Niñas Desaparecidas durante el Conflicto Armado Interno	(National Commission for the Search for Children Disappeared during the Internal Armed Conflict)
Comisión Pro Memoria Histórica	Comisión de Trabajo en Derechos Humanos Pro Memoria Histórica de El Salvador (Pro Historical Memory Human Rights Working Group of El Salvador)
Comité Pro-Monumento	Comité Pro-Monumento a las Víctimas Civiles de Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos (Committee to Build a Monumento to the Civilian Victims of Human Rights Violations)
Conadehgua	Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala (National Coordinating Council of Human Rights of Guatemala)
CONADEP	Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas (National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, Argentina)
Conavigua	Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala (National Coordinating Committee of Widows of Guatemala)
CONDEG	Consejo Nacional de Desplazados de Guatemala (National Council of the Displaced of Guatemala)
COPAZ	Comisión Nacional para la Consolidación de la Paz (National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace)
Copredeb	Comisión Presidencial Coordinadora de la Política del Ejecutivo en Materia de Derechos Humanos (Presidential Human Rights Commission)
COS	Colectivo de Organizaciones Sociales (Collective of Social Organizations)
CPDH	Centro para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos "Madeleine Lagadec" (Center for the Promotion of Human Rights "Madeleine Lagadec")

CPR	Comunidades de Población en Resistencia (Communities of Population in Resistance)
CSJ	Corte Suprema de Justicia (Supreme Court of Justice)
CUC	Comité de Unidad Campesina (Peasant Unity Committee)
EAAF	Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense (Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team)
ECAP	Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial (Community Studies and Psychosocial Action Team)
EG	Encuentro por Guatemala (Meeting for Guatemala)
EGP	Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (Army of the Poor)
EMDN	Estado Mayor de la Defensa Nacional (General Staff of National Defense)
EMP	Estado Mayor Presidencial (Presidential General Staff)
Equipo de Antropología Forense de Guatemala	(Forensic Anthropology Team of Guatemala)
FAFG	Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala)
Famdegua	Asociación Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos de Guatemala (Association of the Family Members of the Detained-Disappeared of Guatemala)
FAR	Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (Rebel Armed Forces)
FDNG	Frente Democrático Nueva Guatemala (New Guatemalan Democratic Front)
FEDEFAM	Federación Latinoamericana de Asociaciones de Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos (Latin American Federation of Associations for Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared)
FENASTRAS	Federación Nacional Sindical de Trabajadores Salvadoreños (National Trade Union Federation of Salvadorian Workers)
FESPAD	Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho (Foundation for the Study of the Application of Law)
Festival Verdad	(Truth Festival)
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (Latin America Social Sciences Institute)
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (Farabundo Martí National

	Liberation Front)
FRG	Frente Republicano Guatemalteco (Guatemalan Republican Front)
Fundación contra el Terrorismo	(Foundation against Terrorism)
FUNDAPI	Fundación de Ayuda al Pueblo Indígena (Foundation to Help the Indigenous People)
GAM	Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (Mutual Support Group)
HIJOS	Hijos e Hijas por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio (Sons and Daughters for Identity and and Justice against Forgetting and Silence)
ICCPG	Instituto de Estudios Comparados en Ciencias Penales de Guatemala (Guatemalan Institute for Comparative Studies in Criminal Sciences)
IDHUCA	Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas" (Human Rights Institute of the Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas")
IEJES	Instituto de Estudios Jurídicos de El Salvador (Institute of Legal Studies of El Salvador)
Incep	Instituto Centroamericano de Estudios Políticos (Central American Institute for Political Studies)
Inguat	Instituto Guatemalteco de Turismo (Guatemalan Tourism Institute)
Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia	(Multi-institutional Agency for Peace and Harmony)
Instituto de Medicina Legal	(Institute of Legal Medicine)
Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos	(Inter American Human Rights Institute)
Instituto Internacional para la Democracia y la Asistencia Electoral	(International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Participation)
Las Dignas	Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida (Women for Dignity and Life)
Líder	Libertad Democrática Renovada (Renewed Democratic Liberty)
MAC	Movimiento Auténtico Cristiano (Authentic Christian Movement)
MLN	Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Movement)
MNR	Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Movement)
Monumento a la Memoria y la Verdad	(Monument for Memory and Truth)
MP	Ministerio Público (Public Ministry)

MUPI	Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (Museum of the Word and the Image)
NSA, or the Archive	National Security Archive
ODHA	Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of Guatemala)
ONUSAL	Misión de Observadores de las Naciones Unidas en El Salvador (United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador)
ORPA	Organización Revolucionaria del Pueblo en Armas (Revolutionary Organization of People in Arms)
PACs	Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (Civil Self-defense Patrols)
PCN	Partido de la Conciliación Nacional (National Conciliation Party)
PDC	Partido Demócrata Cristiano (Christian Democrat Party)
PDDH	Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (Ombudsman's Office for the Defense of Human Rights)
PDH	Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Ombudsman's Office)
PGT	Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (Guatemalan Workers' Party)
PN	Policía Nacional (National Police)
PNC	Policía Nacional Civil (National Civilian Police)
PNR	Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento (National Reparations Program)
PNSD	Plan Nacional de Seguridad y Desarrollo (National Plan of Security and Development)
PP	Partido Patriota (Patriot Party)
PRI	Partido Republicano Institucional (Institutional Republican Party)
Pro-Búsqueda	Asociación Pro-Búsqueda de Niñas y Niños Desaparecidos (Pro-Search Association of Disappeared Children)
PSD	Partido Social Democrático (Social Democratic Party)
RAE	Real Academia Española (Royal Spanish Academy)
Red Activista de El Salvador	(Activist Network of El Salvador)
Remhi	Proyecto Interdiocesano de Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (Interdiocesan Project for the Recuperation of Historical Memory)
SAE	Secretaría de Análisis Estratégico (Secretariat of Strategic Analysis)
SEDEM	Asociación para el Estudio y Promoción de la Seguridad en Democracia

(Association for the Study and Promotion of Security in Democracy)

Sepaz	Secretaría de la Paz (Secretariat of the Peace)
SIP	Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa (Interamerican Press Association)
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission (South Africa)
TSE	Tribunal Supremo Electoral (Supreme Electoral Tribunal)
Tutela Legal	Oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado de San Salvador (Archbishop of San Salvador's Legal Aid Office)
Udefegua	Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit)
UCA	Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas" (Central American University "José Simeón Cañas")
UCS	Unión Comunal Salvadoreña (Salvadoran Communal Union)
UCN	Unión del Centro Nacional (National Centrist Union)
UES	Universidad de El Salvador (University of El Salvador)
UNDP	United Nations Development Project
UNE	Unidad Nacional de Esperanza (National Unity of Hope)
URNG	Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity)
USAC	Universidad de San Carlos (San Carlos University)
WOLA	Washington Office on Latin America

Introduction

On the *Calle del Olvido*



Photo by author. 1 October 2013.

La 3a Avenida (Third Avenue) is one of downtown Guatemala City's many bustling avenues that funnel traffic north and south through the heart of the city to its more far-flung zones and suburbs. It is an unexceptional street, and bears a striking resemblance to the Second, Fourth, Fifth, Seventh, and other nearby avenues.¹ And like many of these other avenues, and the streets which cross them perpendicularly, 3a Avenida also has another, far more poetic name, one likely to be found in a stroll through Gabriel García Márquez's *Macondo*, or, closer to home, in the pages of Guatemala's Nobel prize-winning author, Miguel Ángel Asturias' works—the *Calle del Olvido*. What exactly is being forgotten, however, on the Street of Forgetting, is unclear, for few remember or ever knew why it is called that. The *Calle del Olvido* is lined with houses, shops, and businesses whose (frequently painted) walls are little more than blank canvases for street artists and activists armed with paint, stencils, posters, and glue, as well as others who are less artistically or politically minded but who have the same tools in their hands. The walls are the ideal space on which to make demands on the government or on society, or for these others to lay claim to territory or leave evidence of their presence. Given the tendency (one which sometimes seems to border on obsession) of property and business owners to paint over

¹ The notable exception is Sixth Avenue, *La Sexta*, parts of which are now closed to traffic and other parts of which have been narrowed to one lane; the avenue's sidewalks have been widened accordingly. It is one of the few streets where traffic is tamed, if only a little.

the words and pictures artists, activists, and gang members² leave in their wake, the artwork and graffiti are more often than not ephemeral; once painted over, they will be little more than a faint memory in the minds of those who saw them, a memory passersby must work to remember as they travel down the Street of Forgetting.

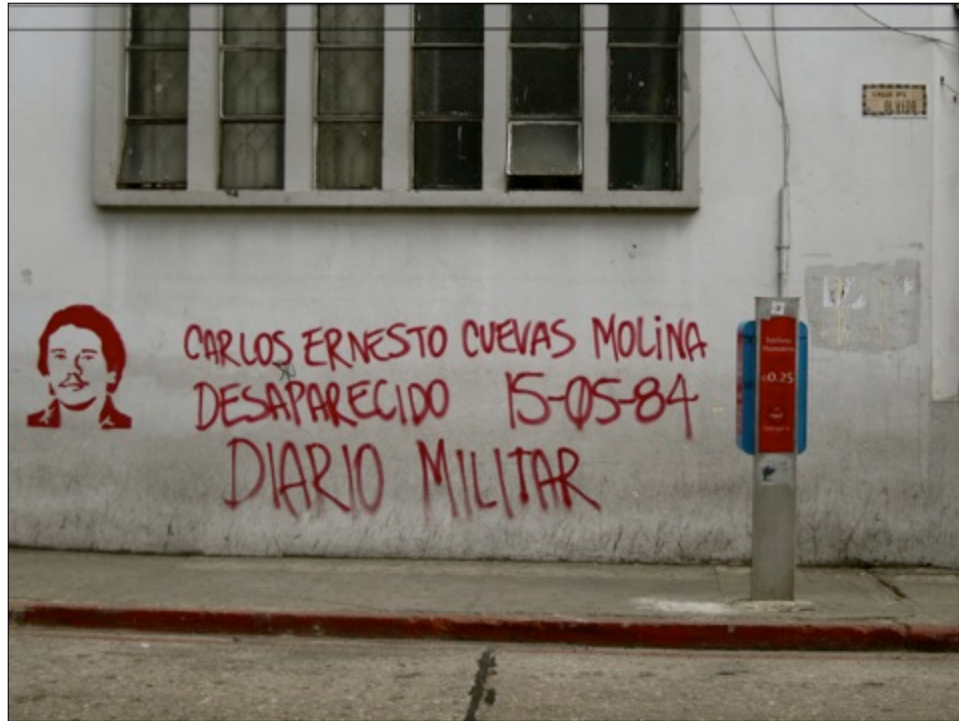


Photo by author. 12 December 2013.

A brief history of the conflicts

Carlos Ernesto Cuevas Molina stares out at those traveling along the Calle del Olvido, 29 years after he was disappeared. Cuevas Molina, along with his partner, Rosario Godoy de Cuevas, and their son,³ are among the tens of thousands of Guatemalans and Salvadorans the

² Gang members are the others mentioned in the previous sentence. See, for example, Ellen Moodie, "Seventeen Years, Seventeen Murders: Biospectacularity and the Production of Post-Cold War Knowledge in El Salvador," *Social Text* 99 27, no. 2 (2009): 77-103.

³ When Héctor Gómez Calito was assassinated for his work with the Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (GAM, Mutual Support Group), Rosario Godoy de Cuevas, his friend and colleague, promised that his death would not be in vain. She was killed in a "car accident" soon after. It was, however, a strange car accident. GAM members who saw her body noticed bite-marks on her breasts and that her underwear was bloody. Her 2-year-old son was also killed, as was her 21-year-old brother. Both showed signs of having been tortured; their fingernails, for example, were missing. (Kate Doyle and Jesse Franzblau, "Historical Archives Lead to Arrest of Police Officers in Guatemalan Disappearance," *The National Security Archive*, 17 March 2009, <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB273/>.)

countries' respective governments and militaries targeted during each country's Cold War-era conflicts. The next pages will provide some historical background on the conflicts in Guatemala and El Salvador, as well as explain some of their key aspects, the ideologies and beliefs that drove the different actors, and the kinds of human rights violations that were committed throughout. This short history provides an outline of "the past" which must either be remembered or forgotten in the post-Peace Accords era.

Guatemala

The roots of Guatemala's "internal armed conflict"⁴ can be traced back centuries, but its more immediate political and social roots lie in the twentieth century. By the mid-1900s, Guatemala had suffered through a long string of often military dictators. The lack of democracy, as well as corruption in the military and a lack of opportunity for advancement, inspired young officers to stage a coup in October 1944, marking the beginning of the so-called Ten Years of Spring. The second president of this period of democratic opening, Jacobo Arbenz, sought to convert Guatemala into an economically independent, capitalist state and to "raise the standard of living of the great masses of our people to the highest level."⁵ Since the Guatemalan economy was based on agriculture, and on highly unequal land ownership where the vast majority did not have access to land, this meant land reform, in the form of the 1952 Agrarian Reform Law. The Law, inspired by the recommendations of the World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development survey, mandated the expropriation of larger tracts of uncultivated land to increase production. Landowners would be reimbursed as per tax records.⁶

⁴ Officially, the period from 1960 to 1996 is called the "internal armed conflict." Gabriel Aguilera Peralta suggests that the war was called the internal armed conflict so that international law would not apply; Gabriel Aguilera Peralta "Realizar un Imaginario: La Paz en Guatemala" in *Desde el Autoritarismo a la Paz*, eds. Edelberto Torres-Rivas and Gabriel Aguilera Peralta (Guatemala: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, 1998), 115. Yet many Guatemalans refer to this period, and especially the 1980s, as *la violencia*. Caren Weisbart explains this further; "Considering that the 'armed conflict' was actually an attack on un-armed community members fleeing from the army and, in some cases, the guerrilla, many Guatemalans, scholars and writers refer to this period in Guatemala's brutal history as 'la violencia.'" (Caren Weisbart, "Beyond Recognition: Alternative Rights-Realizing Strategies in the Northern Quiche Region of Guatemala," 2012, <http://www.yorku.ca/erlac/Weisbart.pdf>.)

⁵ Jim Handy, *Gift of the Devil: a History of Guatemala* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1984), 115.

⁶ The short survey of twentieth century Guatemalan history found in the next several pages draws on Jim Handy's *Gift of the Devil: a History of Guatemala* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1984) and *Revolution in the Countryside: Rural Conflict and Agrarian Reform in Guatemala, 1944-1954* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), Susanne Jonas' *The Battle for Guatemala: Rebels, Death Squads, and US Power* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), Robert Carmack's *Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), and Marc Drouin's "To the Last Seed:

The landed elite, the church, and the military were opposed to Arbenz and the land reform, partly because of a concern about the increasing influence of communism in his administration. The United States-owned United Fruit Company's opposition to the expropriation of their land was also important, as were the company's close ties to the US government. Whether Eisenhower was more concerned with communism or with the interests of the United Fruit Company,⁷ he agreed to fund Arbenz's overthrow. Carlos Castillo Armas led the invasion of the "Liberation Army" and set about dismantling the Revolution's program. He did not shy away from the use of repression. Labor and peasant leaders and activists were assassinated. Cindy Forster described approximately 1000 peasants and banana workers being machine gunned at Finca Jocotán in Tiquisate. In that instance, the officer in charge of the region "had [those who had benefitted from the agrarian reform] dig trenches and they would line up in front of the trenches and kill them with machine guns." Forster adds that repression did not often take such deadly form.⁸ 1954 marks the beginning of what would turn out to be decades of violence and state terrorism, as well as more "soft" techniques, directed against activists of all sorts and the rural, indigenous and non-indigenous populations in general.⁹

The first guerrilla movement appeared in 1960, the immediate cause of which was the government's decision to allow the US to use the country as a training base for the Bay of Pigs invasion. After a failed coup attempt, the officers went into exile, returning soon after to plan a guerrilla war with the aim of creating a more just society. The response was repression, the virtual defeat of the guerrilla by 1967, and increased military control over government. The

Atrocity Crimes in the Genocidal Continuum in Guatemala, 1978-1984" (MA thesis, Concordia University, 2006), Daniel Wilkinson's *Silence on the Mountain: Stories of Terror, Betrayal, and Forgetting in Guatemala* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), and Edward Fischer and R. McKenna Brown's edited work, *Maya Cultural Activism in Guatemala* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), in addition to other works cited below.

⁷ The question of whether or not Arbenz was a communist and how far communists had infiltrated his government, as well as whether fear of communism or United Fruit Company pressure pushed the US to intervene, is the focus of much of the literature surrounding the Revolution and Arbenz's overthrow. See, for example, Handy's *Revolution in the Countryside*, Piero Gleijeses' *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer's *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), Jonas' *The Battle for Guatemala*, and Stephen Streeter's *Managing the Counter-Revolution: The United States & Guatemala, 1954-1961* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001).

⁸ Cindy Forster, *The Time of Freedom: Campesino Workers in Guatemala's October Revolution* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2001), 202-4.

⁹ For information about repression in the post-coup years, See Cindy Forster's *The Time of Freedom*, Greg Grandin's *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin American in the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) and Jonas' *The Battle for Guatemala*.

guerrilla re-emerged in the 1970s with a new strategy for victory—getting the masses, especially the rural peasantry, involved. They were able to tap into rural discontent, and especially anger at local landowners' monopolization of land and the low wages they paid. It must be added that the guerrilla did not arrive in rural communities where residents were simply resigned to their fate. Vibrant peasant organizations and co-operatives, partly inspired by Acción Católica (Catholic Action) and the spread of liberation theology and its "preferential option for the poor,"¹⁰ were thriving in the 1960s and 70s. Though Catholic Action had been founded to reinforce Catholic dogma especially in indigenous areas, by the 1970s, under the influence of often foreign-born priests who embraced liberation theology, the program was involved in literacy campaigns, educational radio programming, creating peasant co-operatives, and other more socially conscious activities. Peasant organizing was not limited to forming local co-operatives;¹¹ rather, it extended beyond the local to the national level. The most notable of these national organizations, and one which crossed the ethnic divide, is the Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC, Peasant Unity Committee). Founded in 1978, by 1980, the CUC was able to mobilize approximately 80,000 peasants in the largest rural strike in Guatemalan history.¹²

The events that took place in Panzós, Alta Verapaz, in May 1978 are clear evidence of rural discontent, rural organizing, and rural repression.¹³ Hundreds of indigenous and dispossessed peasants gathered in the town square to demand title to their land. The military opened fire and killed over 100. The Panzós massacre marked a turning point. Although the conflict was already well under way by 1978, the massacre exposed the military's true colors; it showed their willingness to attack and kill unarmed civilians and was a clear declaration of their intention of making war on the population. Shortly after the massacre, in a clearly fraudulent process, Romeo Lucas García, was elected president. His time in office continued and expanded on the pattern of repression seen at Panzós. Counterinsurgency campaigns targeted union

¹⁰ Phillip Berryman's *Liberation Theology: The Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movement in Latin American and Beyond* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987) is a good introduction to the topic.

¹¹ Though certainly the level of organizing in co-operatives was high. Handy writes that 20% of indigenous Highland residents were members of co-operatives in 1975, and that that number grew following the 1976 earthquake. (Handy, *Gift of the Devil*, 240). Betsey Konefal explores different aspects of indigenous activism in *For Ever Indio Who Falls Falls: A History of Maya Activism in Guatemala, 1960-1990* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010).

¹² Cindy Forster, " 'Miles de Machetes en Alto': Las Luchas Campesinas de la Costa Sur en el Surgimiento de la Revolución Guatemalteca, 1970-1980," in *Guatemala: La Infinita Historia de las Resistencias*, ed. Manolo Vela Casteñeda, 573-613, (Guatemala City: SEPAZ, 2013).

¹³ Greg Grandin has a useful discussion of the Panzós massacre in *The Last Colonial Massacre*.

members, students, academics, and members of the official opposition. Jean-Marie Simon commented, "it was a time when people changed even their pseudonyms"; vice president Francisco Villagrán Kramer remarked in 1980, after he fled Guatemala to the safety of Washington, "there [were] no political prisoners, only political corpses."¹⁴ In the rural areas, selective killings turned into massacres of entire communities. The army launched a series of counterinsurgency campaigns against civilians, convinced that they were involved with the various guerrilla organizations operating at that time. The army put the guerrillas (who united in 1982 to form the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca [URNG, Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity]) on the defensive, a position from which they never recovered.

A coup on 23 March 1982 brought Efraín Ríos Montt to power. The counterinsurgency became even more brutal; blood flowed like water as the military razed villages, massacred their inhabitants, and displaced a massive portion of the rural population, who the military believed were collaborating with the guerrilla. As a member of the Ríos Montt administration said, "The guerrillas won over many Indian collaborators. Therefore the Indians were subversives. And how do you fight subversion? Clearly you had to kill Indians because they were collaborating with subversion. And then it would be said that you were killing innocent people. But they are not innocent, they had sold out to subversion."¹⁵ As former soldier Chilin Hultaxh said, the army's strategy was to "kill ten people, because at least one of them would be a guerrilla, even if the other nine were innocent."¹⁶ Attempts to win the hearts and minds of the population accompanied these violent campaigns. Yet for this to happen, the army needed hearts and minds to win, so the military rounded up the displaced and resettled them in "model villages." Beatriz Manz describes the model villages as "appear[ing] more like run-down prison camps than villages."¹⁷ The model villages, populated by people from different regions, communities, and ethnic groups, were meant to foster fear, suspicion, and division among inhabitants. Yet even those who were not forced to resettle in model villages were under almost constant military surveillance. Linda Green describes life in a non-model village with a military garrison perched on the hill above town as living in a fishbowl. From the safety of the army post, soldiers were

¹⁴ Jean-Marie Simon, *Guatemala: Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1988), 76 and 72.

¹⁵ Judith Zur, *Violent Memories: Mayan War Widows in Guatemala* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 67-8.

¹⁶ Victor Montejo, *Voices from Exile: Violence and Survival in Modern Maya History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 90.

¹⁷ Beatriz Manz, *Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror, and Hope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 158.

able to watch residents and their movements, and residents were entirely subject to the army's whims and cruelty.¹⁸

The already high level of military control was extended through mandatory participation in the Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PACs, Civil Self-defense Patrols).¹⁹ By the mid-1980s, approximately one million were mobilized in the PACs.²⁰ The PACs were the army's local informers, forced to spy on their neighbors and draw up lists of guerrilla sympathizers or collaborators. The PACs were also forced to commit atrocities, thereby spreading guilt to much of the rural population, turning victims into perpetrators and converting the conflict into one which pitted communities against each other.²¹ This guilt, the army hoped, would also serve to silence the population, as would massacres, rape, torture, and disappearance. These also, of course, had the effect of killing the witnesses to the crimes, and discouraging others from joining the guerrilla. "It was not possible to speak"²² in Guatemala in the 1980s, and many did not dare to in an effort to protect themselves and their families.

By 1983, Ríos Montt had lost control of the army, had been unable to appease the business sector, and, because of his weekly televised sermons, had become an embarrassment. He was overthrown in August 1983 and replaced by Coronel Óscar Humberto Mejía Victores. Mejía Victores concentrated on solidifying the military's position in the countryside by continuing his predecessors' tactics meant to order, control, and militarize rural society. The popular and labor movements also continued to be targeted. Mejía Victores was given the additional task of planning the transition to constitutional government. He called an election for the Constituent Assembly, which then drafted a new constitution. Elections for the presidency

¹⁸ Linda Green, *Fear as a Way of Life: Mayan War Widows in Rural Guatemala* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 61.

¹⁹ Jennifer Schirmer, *The Guatemalan Military Project: A Violence Called Democracy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 72-3 and 65.

²⁰ Of these only an estimated 5-10% were armed; most patrollers carried only sticks, machetes, or guns carved from wood and painted black, the last of which only served to make them a more obvious target for the guerrillas. Even when armed, the patrols were no match for the guerrillas given their lack of military training. The PACs were also treated as cannon fodder and were frequently used as a "human shield" to protect soldiers from the guerrillas' surprise attacks.

²¹ Susanne Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala: Rebels, Death Squads, and US Power* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 150-2 and Schirmer, *The Guatemalan Military Project*, 81-2 and 91.

²² Carlos Y. Flores, *Bajo la Cruz: Memoria y Dimensión Sobrenatural del Gran Sufrimiento entre los Q'eqchi' de Alta Verapaz* (Cobán, Guatemala: Ak' Kutan Centro Bartolomé de las Casas, 2001).

were held in 1985 and a civilian was elected for the first time in decades, though the military maintained significant power, especially in the countryside.²³

An estimated 200,000 were killed or disappeared in 36 years of violence, from 1960 to 1996. The vast majority was indigenous, leading many to conclude that acts of genocide had been committed in Guatemala. Yet Guatemalans did not simply allow this to happen to them. Levels of organizing to protest the violence and to demand that relatives be returned remained high throughout the conflict despite the risks involved. Relatives went to morgues and hospitals looking for the disappeared; some placed ads in papers describing loved ones and asking for information. The most "daring"²⁴ filed writs of habeas corpus, daring because, as anthropologist Judith Zur pointed out, "Having a political death or 'disappeared one' (*desaparecido*) in the family is like admitting to a contagious disease."²⁵ With time, relatives organized more formally to help the survivors and demand to know what had happened to loved ones. These organizations continue their work today.

El Salvador

The underlying causes of El Salvador's Civil War are, as in Guatemala, centuries old. Yet 1932's *La Matanza* is seen as a precursor to later violence, and is used as a point of comparison. Rural unrest and hardship pushed peasants to take action. On 22 January 1932, they occupied a handful of towns in the western part of the country. There was some looting and a few executions of particularly ruthless landowners. The military quickly put down the rebellion; vigilante groups then took over and traveled the countryside killing peasants and rural workers, as well as members of leftist parties and unions, many of whom were indigenous. An estimated 30,000 were killed. The political legacies of the massacre are significant. The events of 1932, which took place at the beginning of Maximiliano Martínez Hernández's dictatorship, pushed the oligarchy to agree to give up political office in exchange for the military's protection of their

²³ See also, Ricardo Falla's *Masacres en la Selva: Ixcán, Guatemala, 1975-1982*, translated by Julia Howland (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), Jonas' *The Battle for Guatemala*, and Simonne Remijnse's *Memories of Violence: Civil Patrols and the Legacy of Conflict in Joyabaj, Guatemala* (Amsterdam: Rozenberg Publishers, 2002).

²⁴ Member of the Asociación Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos de Guatemala (Famdegua, Association of the Family Members of the Detained-Disappeared of Guatemala), interview with author, 26 March 2012.

²⁵ Zur, *Violent Memories*, 77.

interests. By the 1970s, the military had to resort to increasingly violent repression to stay in power, both in urban and rural areas.²⁶

Many Salvadorans organized around land and other rural issues in these decades, despite the risks.²⁷ Ironically, the government's decision to do something about the agrarian problem contributed to the growth of the same activism that the government wished to repress. The government, for example, initiated land reform and encouraged the creation of new rural co-operatives as a way to solve the rural crisis. The government also supported education projects, many of which were sponsored by the US. Workshops were organized to teach about co-operatives, agrarian laws, health issues, and farming and organizational techniques, among other things. These solved little, but, as in Guatemala, they did allow participants to acquire new skills and begin to embrace the idea of working together to better their situation. Peasant leagues began to form as a result, one of the first of which was the Unión Comunal Salvadoreña (UCS, Salvadoran Communal Union), which had over 100,000 members by 1980.²⁸ The UCS had ties to both the US and Salvadoran governments, who saw it as a way to bring peasants under the watchful eye of the military. But the UCS was also a positive experience for many peasants as they became more aware of and educated about issues that were important to them, and as they

²⁶ Jeffrey L. Gould and Aldo Lauria-Santiago, *To Rise in Darkness: Revolution, Repression, and Memory in El Salvador, 1920-1932* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008). For an interesting discussion of the memory of 1932, see Jennifer Tilley's *Seeing Indians*, Héctor Lindo-Fuentes, Erik Ching, and Rafael A. Lara-Martínez's *Remembering a Massacre in El Salvador*, and Roque Dalton's *Miguel Marmol*, which Lindo-Fuentes, Ching, and Lara-Martínez discuss.

²⁷ The following summary of Salvadoran history draws on Lauria-Santiago and Leigh Binford's *Landscapes of Struggle: Politics, Society, and Community in El Salvador* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), William Leogrande's *Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977-1992* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), Cynthia McClintock's *Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador's FMLN and Peru's Shining Path* (Washington, D.C.: Unites States Institute for Peace, 1998); Irina Carlota Silber's *Everyday Revolutionaries: Gender, Violence, and Disillusionment in Postwar El Salvador* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), Ralph Sprenkels' *The Price of Peace: The Human Rights Movement in Postwar El Salvador* (Amsterdam: Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation, 2005), Molly Todd's *Beyond Displacement: Campesinos, Refugees, and Collective Action in the Salvadoran Civil War* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), and Elisabeth Jean Wood's *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), in addition to other works cited.

²⁸ Molly Todd divides peasant unions into orthodox and progressive unions. Though she recognizes that membership was fluid, she places the UCS in the orthodox category along with the Organización Democrática Nacionalista (ORDEN, Nationalist Democratic Organization). (Todd, *Beyond Displacement*, 30.) Significantly, the Salvadoran Truth Commission found that there was "substantial evidence" to prove that ORDEN, along with the National Guard, were responsible for the deaths of over 300 peasants in 1980, in the Río Sumpul massacre. (Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador, *From Madness to Hope: The 12-year War in El Salvador: Report of the Commission on the Truth for El Salvador*, 1993, <http://www.usip.org/resources/truth-commission-el-salvador>, 116.) The Commission also described ORDEN as a "precursor of the death squads." (Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador, *From Madness to Hope*, 191.)

learned how valuable they were to the government. Members learned to ask the government for benefits (though they did not always receive them), gained experience organizing, and saw firsthand the improvements that could be achieved through co-operative efforts.

Tied up in all of this is liberation theology, as it was in Guatemala. Peasants organized into Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (CEBs, Christian Base Communities) and attended the peasant universities and training centers the dioceses sponsored. Peasants talked to each other at these training sessions and many realized that they faced the same challenges, as peasants. They took these ideas home with them, as they did the skills they learned; some also took these ideas and skills into remote villages as they walked around the countryside as catechists or itinerant organizers. Peasants also began establishing alliances with other sectors, which helped them expand their visions and goals beyond the local. Guerrilla organizations, therefore, found fertile ground.²⁹ The five guerrilla organizations that existed by 1980 (when they united to form the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional [FMLN, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front]) hoped, as in Guatemala, to spark a revolution, overthrow the government, and usher in a new, more just system. And it was peasants' support that transformed the FMLN into a large movement, so large that by the end of 1984, they controlled one-fifth of the country and could move freely in that territory.

1979-1983 were the worst years of the war in El Salvador, much like in Guatemala. Also as in Guatemala, the army's counterinsurgency strategy was based on the idea that the entire rural population was collaborating with the guerrilla. They were the sea in which the guerrilla fish swam; thus, to defeat the insurgency, the sea had to be drained. Civilians were massacred in rural areas, including almost 1000 in the course of a few days in and around El Mozote, Morazán,³⁰ but many victims were also selectively targeted for their activism or politics, especially in urban areas. These included members of political parties, popular organizations, and the Catholic church.³¹ The military was responsible for the majority of the violence, though the early 1980s

²⁹ Recently, scholars have suggested that the leaders of these peasant movements were a driving force behind the guerrillas. Joaquín Chávez argues that the involvement of these popular intellectuals and their peasant supporters transformed the insurgency from a small conflict led by guerrillas from the urban middle class into a force to be reckoned with. Chávez argues that there was already an insurgency in the rural areas, though it was not necessarily an armed insurgency, and that the guerrillas were able to tap into it to become truly popular organizations; Joaquín M. Chávez, "The Pedagogy of Revolution: Popular Intellectuals and the Origins of the Salvadoran Insurgency, 1960-1980" (PhD diss., New York University, 2010).

³⁰ Mark Danner's *The Massacre at El Mozote* (New York: Vintage, 1994) offers a detailed reconstruction of the massacre.

³¹ A range of guerrillas have written about their experiences of repression before and during the war, including

also saw an increase in death squad terror, much of it involving members of the newly formed Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA, Nationalist Republican Alliance). This included its founder, former colonel Roberto D'Aubuisson. While D'Aubuisson left the dirty work to others, he was the intellectual author of various assassinations, including the March 1980 assassination of Archbishop Romero. Officially lasting from 1980 to 1992, the Civil War cost the lives of an estimated 80,000 Salvadorans.

Peace

By the late 1980s, after decades of war and conflict, Central Americans were exhausted.³² The Central American Peace Accords, commonly known as Esquipulas II, committed Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala to work toward finding negotiated settlements to the region's conflicts. Though little immediate action was taken in El Salvador or Guatemala, Esquipulas II helped to solidify the idea of negotiations. In El Salvador, both the military and the FMLN finally agreed to sit down at the negotiating table after the FMLN's second "final offensive" in November 1989. Brokered by the UN, the parties signed the final peace agreement at Chapultepec Castle in Mexico City on 16 January 1992. The Salvadoran Peace Accords were meant to establish the rule of law in El Salvador and to legitimize state institutions. They focused on dismantling the military institutions that had committed gross human rights violations. Because the FMLN viewed the peace process as a way to become a political party and electoral politics as a way to convert their vision of El Salvador to reality, they focused on making sure that elections would be free, fair, and open, and that security forces would not be able to easily convert themselves into institutions which massacred civilians. As a result, the peace accords dealt with socioeconomic problems only in a very limited way, and did not fully address the root causes of the war.

Salvador Cayetano, Fermán Cienfuegos/Eduardo Sancho, Nidia Diaz, Marvin Galeas, Ana Guadalupe Martínez, and Salvador Sánchez Cerén.

³² These short summaries of the peace processes come from Cynthia Arnson's *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999.); Jack Spence's "War and Peace in Central America: Comparing Transitions toward Democracy and Social Equity in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua" (Brookline, MA: Hemisphere Initiatives, 2004); Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth M. Cousens' *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002); FLACSO's "De la Experiencia Salvadoreña a la Esperanza Guatemalteca: Acuerdos de Paz en El Salvador y Guatemala, International Conference, 14-15 January 1997" (San Salvador: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, 1997); Margaret Popkin's *Peace without Justice: Obstacles to Building the Rule of Law in El Salvador* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); and Jonas' *Of Centaurs and Doves: Guatemala's Peace Process* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000).

In Guatemala, the negotiations took much longer and the peace accords were different. The military and URNG finally met in Oslo in 1990, a meeting which the government and military only agreed to attend because of the changing international situation and because the government was in crisis. The talks broke down soon after, resuming in January 1994 with the involvement of the UN. Over the next two years, the parties signed agreements about human rights, the formation of the UN verification mission, the establishment of the Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico (CEH, Historical Clarification Commission), indigenous rights, the agrarian situation, the legal integration of the URNG, the role of the military, and constitutional and electoral reform. The final Accord on a Firm and Lasting Peace was signed on 29 December 1996 in Guatemala City. Yet this was not the end of the process. For the peace to firmly take root, reforms to the constitution had to be made, which meant that a referendum had to be held on the proposed amendments. Most of the proposed reforms were defeated with the 1999 referendum, ending the implementation of many aspects of the peace accords.

The Project

Ernesto Cuevas Molina refuses to be forgotten. Or, rather, those who painted his name and face on the 3a. Avenida refuse to allow him to be forgotten. In reference to South Africa, Liepollo Lebohang Pheko wrote, "Memory is an act of defiance because erasure is an instinct of conquest."³³ This is certainly true in Guatemala and El Salvador, as sectors of the political, economic, and social elite have sought to erase the past. In such a context, remembering Cuevas Molina is an act of defiance, as are remembering the tens of thousands of disappeared Guatemalans and Salvadorans, remembering the acts of genocide committed in Guatemala, remembering the Guatemalan and Salvadoran military and paramilitary's massacres, and remembering both states' terrorism.

Conflict and violence form the backdrop of this project, while these acts of defiance, of remembering, as well as the instinct of erasure that inspires them, form the project's core. The focus is on what happens after brutal and devastating periods of violence, on how people in Guatemala and El Salvador have proposed to grapple with, overcome, or work through³⁴ such

³³ Liepollo Lebohang Pheko, "Twist Memory and You Distort Identity," *Mail and Guardian*, 10 October 2104, accessed 15 October 2014, <http://mg.co.za/article/2014-10-09-twist-memory-and-you-distort-identity>.

³⁴ Sigmund Freud, "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-analysis II)," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund*

violent and divisive pasts. The question is exceedingly important (and is asked all too often, given the series of conflicts witnessed around the world in the past decades), yet the answer is far from simple. Different societies have responded in different ways over the years. Some opt for trials, others create commissions to investigate the "truth" of the past, and still others simply refuse to address the past. Lying behind these more technical questions is the larger question of whether societies with violent histories will remember or forget their pasts. Is memory the best way to achieve the hoped-for goal of "never again," or would oblivion be better? Closely linked to this question is the issue of what parts of the past will be brought to the forefront and remembered, or pushed to the margins and forgotten. Yet another interrelated question revolves around how the past is talked about in the public sphere. It is the intersection of these questions that this dissertation explores. What is said about memory and forgetting in the public sphere in El Salvador and Guatemala? Are there calls to remember the past or parts of it? To (very actively and purposefully) forget it? Why do people promote one or the other? What past is it, which "truth" about the past is it, that those who call for memory are talking about? Is forgetting promoted within a larger discourse of memory? What mechanisms are used to push for oblivion? Is the memory/forgetting discourse even present? If not, how do people talk about the past? Do they talk about it at all? Is there a different kind of discourse about the past that dominates?

A short comment is necessary before continuing. This investigation is about what members of El Salvador and Guatemala's elites³⁵ say about the conflicts. It is about the discursive frameworks some of these elites have created, thereby dictating the language that elites who oppose that framework must use. These are public declarations, all directed at an audience³⁶ and clearly meant to be heard by someone. Most often that "someone" is a rarely defined "Guatemalan" or "Salvadoran," though they are not always listening and so do not hear. Indeed, in Guatemala, language means that many might hear but cannot understand what is being said. That aside, politicians certainly do speak, journalists do write, and activists do act with the expectation and understanding that they are not doing so in a space devoid of "Guatemalans" or "Salvadorans." The Guatemalans and Salvadorans who fill this space, who read newspapers and

Freud, *Volume XII (1911-1913): The Case of Schreber Papers on Technique and Other Works*, with Anna Freud, translated by James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1974), 147-156.

³⁵ I use elite here in reference to those with access to education.

³⁶ Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson, and Brian L. Ott, "Introduction: Rhetoric/Memory/Place," in *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, ed. Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 6.

the pamphlets and reports which civil society organizations and the government publish, are most likely literate residents of one of the two capital cities. They are a minority of the population. Yet even if a minority of Guatemalans read newspapers or organizations' reports, this does not mean that the discourse these contain does not reach a broader audience. The reach and influence of newspapers, for example, should not be underestimated, as anthropologist and political scientist Ricardo Sáenz de Tejada Rojas' study of electoral politics and participation in Guatemala, especially among the Maya, demonstrates. Sáenz de Tejada concludes that, "faced with the weakness of political parties...the media and especially those who control them, take charge of generating 'public opinion.'" The media's influential role and how they accredit or discredit an institution or individual's image is recognized internationally. It is almost possible to say that the media are the ones who elect the president."³⁷

David Gross argues a related point. He suggests that, since the mid-twentieth century, the mass media have become the dominant framers of social memory, replacing the state (which had itself replaced the church) as determining what is remembered and forgotten. Gross suggests that while the mass media—the "overlapping and interpenetrating worlds" of print and electronic media, including newspapers, magazines, tabloids, film, radio, and television—are most concerned with pop culture, they also determine societal values and frame what is important enough to be remembered, and what is not. As such, the mass media have become the most important source of information about the past and dictate which aspects of it should be remembered. According to Gross, the media also determine what we should think about the past. The media is, he adds, able to have such a key role in this because they seem to be "down-to-earth and democratic," in addition to being omnipresent.³⁸

And while human rights organizations' reports might not be read, certainly their message and work are more known. This is especially true of organizations that are actively involved with relatives of the victims and in rural communities, supporting the search for justice or finding the remains of loved ones. These same messages are evident in the work of street artists in downtown Guatemala City and in protests and demonstrations in front of El Salvador's National Cathedral. Many street artists and demonstrators, however, would likely reject the very

³⁷ Ricardo Sáenz de Tejada, *Elecciones, Participación Política y Pueblo Maya en Guatemala* (Guatemala City: Instituto de Gerencia Política, 2005), 253.

³⁸ David Gross, *Lost Time: On Remembering and Forgetting in Late Modern Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 117-8 and 122.

suggestion that they are part of either Guatemala or El Salvador's elite. And certainly, many are firmly members of the working class. Nevertheless, they are included in this project at various moments, in part because their grassroots organizing is a very public, very visible reflection of the message of the more formal, and better-funded, human rights community. Yet "reflect" is not the right word, for discourse is formed in dialogue, even between members of the larger human rights community. Conversations between different members of the larger community continually shape discourse. Indeed, since many of those at protests or who spread their message on city streets are relatives of the victims of state terrorism (they appear at each protest holding photos of their dead) or are the heirs of the activism of the 1970s and 80s (and especially of radical student activism), they are often the ones who insist on memory and truth most loudly. They refuse to allow the past to be forgotten. In this, they push the human rights community. Indeed, it could be argued that the human rights community reflects the discourse present on city streets and at demonstrations.

Returning to Sáenz de Tejada's comments about the influence of the media, despite his declarations and despite the work of activists, the subject of this investigation remains what is being said and written, not what is being heard, read, and understood. There will be no discussion of whether or how what intellectuals, journalists, activists, and politicians say resonates with "the average Salvadoran" or "the typical Guatemalan" (if such people exist) who might hear or read their words.³⁹ The focus is on what is said or written, and on what other intellectuals, activists, and commentators understand those words to mean.

In the series of questions posed above about what to do after periods of violence, the focus is on what "people" say and do. This, as well as the excessive, but equally intentional, use of the passive voice masks the identity of whoever is speaking these phrases about memory and forgetting. But their identities—for there is more than one "people," more than one "they"—are a key element of this project. In general terms, "they" are the members of two broadly defined sectors that disagree about almost everything: conservatives and the human rights community. The catch-all category of "conservatives" includes military officers; the economic elite; members of conservative political parties, whether they were politically active during the conflict or not; and, individuals, especially academics, journalists, and commentators, who might not belong to

³⁹ In the case of politicians, however, victory at the urns might confirm that voters agree with what is said. On the other hand, electoral success might indicate that the winner had more money to spend on the campaign, gave out more free things, and made more promises that voters wanted to hear, for example, about security and jobs.

any particular party but whose ideology or politics mirrors that of the conservative sectors whose praise they sing. The "human rights community," on the other hand, includes members of victims' organizations, often relatives of the dead or disappeared; individuals with ties to those organizations; politicians who identify and work on behalf of victims and their relatives; and commentators, journalists, and academics who collaborate and work in solidarity with the victims, survivors, and their relatives. The human rights community also generally includes those who lean toward the left. In Guatemala, the left (members of which lean to the left in varying degrees) fits more comfortably under the umbrella of the human rights community than in El Salvador where, as will be seen, the human rights community sees the left (i.e., the FMLN) as only sometimes working toward the same goals.

A comment on the Catholic church and the countries' respective guerrilla forces is necessary here. In Guatemala, the church, and especially its Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHA, Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of Guatemala), works in favor of human rights and the victims. Of this there can be no doubt. In El Salvador, on the other hand, the church has a close relationship with the conservative elite. The Salvadoran church is a conservative institution led by largely conservative bishops, despite the creation of what would become the Oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado de San Salvador (Tutela Legal, Archbishop of San Salvador's Legal Aid Office) in the 1970s and despite local communities and priests' embrace of liberation theology. Thus, in El Salvador, the church as an institution cannot be included in the human rights community, though Tutela Legal certainly is.

The situation of former guerrillas in El Salvador is rather more complex than in Guatemala, where the URNG were unable to transition into a successful and powerful political party capable of winning the presidency. Far from it: the URNG had only two deputies in Congress in 2012.⁴⁰ Indeed, in Guatemala, political parties come and go in the blink of an eye, during which time membership is in constant flux, creating an environment where membership in a particular political party is less important (in determining what one says about the past) than ties to the military or economic elite. In terms of the latter, some argue that a "megaparty"—the right wing and pro-business Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras (CACIF, Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Commercial,

⁴⁰ Congreso de la República de Guatemala, "Diputados y Diputadas: Séptima Legislatura, 2012-2016," <http://www.congreso.gob.gt/legislaturas.php>.

Industrial, and Financial Associations)—really controls politics in Guatemala, making sure its interests are looked after.⁴¹ In the discussion about Guatemala, political parties will be largely absent, as will, in fact, any significant discussion of CACIF. Nevertheless, it is important to keep CACIF's power in mind throughout the discussion. In El Salvador, on the other hand, the FMLN has been very successful in their transition from clandestine force to political party, winning important mayoral races, legislative contests, and finally the presidency, all within their first 20 years as a legal political party. They clearly cannot be included under the conservative umbrella, yet, given their complicated relationship with human rights and victims' organizations, nor do they always fit well with the human rights community. As a result, discussion of the FMLN will largely be limited to specific sections of this project.

An additional element in this discussion (which points, at the very least, to the many shades of gray hiding behind this black and white division of the public sphere into "conservatives" and "the human rights community") is the fluidity of group membership. In El Salvador, for example, many former guerrillas, who, in the explanation above, would not fit well in either category, have become much more politically conservative, disillusioned with the FMLN, its in-fighting, and the changing power dynamics among the different factions that make up the party. Those who have crossed the floor are harshly criticized by their former comrades. In Guatemala, on the other hand, important members of the human rights community have taken posts in conservative governments, though they have not abandoned their beliefs as a result. Rather, they opted to work in the government to achieve change. Had these individuals begun to change their beliefs, they would most certainly have been expelled from the community they had once been part of. In both countries, there is little room to challenge group discourse or belief. The borders of acceptable discourse are constantly policed and if they are crossed, reaction is swift.

The issue of policing will be explored in relation to the human rights community in Guatemala in Chapter Six, but conservatives also police their own. This can be seen in what happened to former ARENA president Tony Saca. Saca, who served as president from 2004 to 2009, was expelled from ARENA six months after his term ended. He was not expelled specifically for betraying ARENA's discursive focus on amnesty and forgetting; rather, the

⁴¹ Manolo Vela Castañeda, "El Megapartido y Sus Perritos Falderos," *El Periódico*, 6 July 2014, <http://elperiodico.com.gt/es/20140706/domingo/250343>.

Consejo Ejecutivo Nacional (Coena, National Executive Council) voted to kick him out of the party for "acting against the party's principles," as the online Salvadoran newspaper *El Faro* reported.⁴² The Coena, in should be pointed out, includes a Vice President of Ideology, though Ernesto Muyschondt, the Vice President until late 2014, dedicated at least some of his time not to ideology but to slandering FMLN president, Mauricio Funes.⁴³

Internal policing is even clearer in Guatemala, as seen in the reaction to the interview Colonel Otto Noack Sierra gave on Dutch radio. In the interview, conducted in July 1998 and as reported in the Guatemalan newspaper, *Siglo Veintiuno*, Noack recognized the military's "excesses and abuses" and concluded that the military should "repent." The High Command ordered his arrest days later for insubordination. He did not, the Army said, have military authorization to express his views.⁴⁴ It was clear, however, that this had little to do with having permission to give an interview and everything to do with what he said. The military was very obviously policing its own, and sending a clear message to others who might be tempted to voice similar opinions: you, too, will be arrested. You, too, will be stopped. Christian Tomuschat, head of the CEH, went to visit Noack while he was detained and reportedly applauded his bravery and expressed a hope that others would do the same.⁴⁵ The military, however, could not arrest Tomuschat. Those who opposed his words, such as president Arzú (via the Minister of Foreign Relations), could only reject what he had said and accuse him—a foreigner—of interfering in internal matters. The implications of this were not lost on Tomuschat. In addition to Tomuschat

⁴² Sergio Arauz, "Arena expulsa a ex presidente Saca," *El Faro*, 14 December 2009, <http://www.elfaro.net/es/200912/noticias/730/>. He was also expelled, according to Freedom House, for corruption. (Freedom House, "Freedom in the World, 2011: El Salvador," accessed 17 March 2015, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/el-salvador#.VQiuqGYjhG4>.)

⁴³ ARENA, "Coena," accessed 17 March 2014, <http://arena.org.sv/noticia-coena/>. It is also worth pointing out that Funes accused Muyschondt, as well as powerful ARENA members Ana Vilma de Escobar and Roberto D'Aubuisson, of libel and slander for their suggestion that Funes was driving a Ferrari which had crashed, and that Funes was addicted to both drugs and alcohol. (Edward Gutiérrez, "Ernesto Muyschondt deja el COENA," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 19 December 2014, <http://www.laprensagrafica.com/2014/12/19/ernesto-muyschondt-deja-el-coena> and "Inicia audiencia de intimación contra Muyschondt por supuesta calumnia al Presidente Funes," *Transparencia Activa*, 29 April 2014, <http://www.transparenciaactiva.gob.sv/inicia-audiencia-de-intimacion-contra-muyschondt-por-supuesta-calumnia-al-presidente-funes/>.) Muyschondt later counter-sued Funes for the same crimes. (Gloria Funes, "Muyschondt demanda por calumnia y difamación a Mauricio Funes," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 2 June 2014, <http://www.laprensagrafica.com/2014/06/02/muyschondt-demanda-por-calumnia-y-difamacion-a-mauricio-funes>.) This is interesting behavior for a Vice President of Ideology, all the more so because *La Prensa Gráfica* reported on his resignation in 2014 by saying that, as Vice President "Muyschondt remained critical of the the FMLN's first government and Mauricio Funes." (Gutiérrez, "Ernesto Muyschondt deja el COENA.")

⁴⁴ "Arrestan al coronel Noack Sierra," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 18 July 1998.

⁴⁵ "Arrestan al coronel Noack Sierra"; Carlso Castañaza Rosales, "Caso coronel Noack: Gobierno arremete contra Tomuschat," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 21 July 1998.

stating that his declarations about Noack were those of the CEH as a whole (the other two commissioners, it must be remembered, were Guatemalan), commissioner Alfredo Balsells Tojo added that the commission hoped that the government was not trying to "prematurely delegitimize" the CEH's report.⁴⁶ The military, therefore, could and did police one of its own when his words challenged the military's version of the conflict. The government, however, try as it might, could not police what members of the internationally-supported CEH might say or do. Its power in this regard was limited.

The issue of policing aside, the labels of conservative (which is also sometimes called the state or military in this dissertation) and human rights community (or progressives or subalterns) should not be understood as describing concrete or unchanging groups. It is clear that the military and the state are not the same thing. Though both might be conservative, their interests can also collide. And their words are not identical. In the human rights community, some who repeat an overall discourse which highlights the importance of remembering are politically and/or economically more conservative than others who have a similar view about the past. And certainly some organizations that work in favor of human rights focus very little on the past. The labels used to describe the different sectors are, therefore, a convenient shorthand for heterogeneous groups of individuals who might only be united in their views about the past. The binary this project creates is an over simplification which is only sometimes made more complicated. The fractures, fissures, and fuzziness of group membership discussed here should not be forgotten.

Given the nature of the two conflicts, the two general sectors that exist in each country, which will be discussed in greater depth in the section on sources below, have every right and might even be expected to disagree. Conservatives, including military officers, were in power during the conflicts, directing counterinsurgency efforts and, seen from the most generous angle, turning a blind eye to human rights violations. The conservative heirs of those in power during the conflicts have every reason to want what happened in the past to remain in the past, for the crimes of the past to remain buried, for the past, in short, to be forgotten. The human rights community, on the other hand, emerged out of the ashes the military and its proxies left in their wake as they disappeared activists, burned crops, and razed communities. The human rights

⁴⁶ Castañaza Rosales, "Caso coronel Noack"; Julie López, "Caso Noack: Sigue pugna entre Gobierno y CEH," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 22 July 1998.

community works to exhumate the past, to keep the past relevant, to reveal the names of those responsible for past crimes; they work to keep the memory of the past alive and to find out what happened to the victims.

I argue that the question of how to talk about the past, about whether the past should be remembered or forgotten, has been answered in different ways in Guatemala and El Salvador. In Guatemala members of different sectors—from the most conservative with ties to the perpetrators and economic elite, to the most adamant advocate of finding the remains of an assassinated or disappeared mother, brother, wife, or son—insist very broadly that the past be remembered so that it never happens again. I suggest that promoting the work which memory does to prevent repetition is Guatemala's common discursive framework. In William Roseberry's words, this framework determines "the central terms around which and in terms of which contestation and struggle can occur."⁴⁷ In Roseberry's argument, it is the state that hopes to determine the discursive framework that dominates. This is its ultimate goal, and one that is rarely achieved. In this scheme, the state's discourse becomes the discourse subalterns must use to challenge the status quo.⁴⁸ In Guatemala, on the other hand, the importance of memory in preventing repetition is the discourse of non-state actors; it is the discourse of the country's two historical commissions and the domestic (and international) human rights community. Though they are part of the country's elite sectors, they are also certainly subalterns in terms of their economic and political influence. Conservatives and those with an agenda counter to that of the human rights community must use the human rights community's discourse to oppose that sector's message and work. Thus, instead of openly declaring that Guatemalans must forget to prevent repetition and to ensure reconciliation, conservatives repeat the human rights community's call for memory, but do so in such a way that, if the meaning is interrogated, if the surface discourse is peeled back, it becomes clear that they, in fact, celebrate a sweeping, and deliberate, forgetting. When conservatives speak of the importance of amnesty, reconciliation, and *perdón* (pardon or forgiveness), these words are understood, and especially by the human rights community, as synonyms for forgetting. Indeed, when conservatives call for *perdón* or

⁴⁷ William Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, eds. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 360-1.

⁴⁸ William Roseberry, "Hegemony, Power, and Languages of Contention," in *The Politics of Difference: Ethnic Premises in a World of Power*, eds. Edwin N. Wilmsen and Patrick McAllister (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 81-2.

reconciliation, the human rights community reminds Guatemalans quite loudly that far from forgetting the conflict, it must be remembered.

Yet within this common framework, there is space for different versions or truths of the conflict to exist. The human rights community's truth of the conflict is largely that revealed by the Catholic church's Proyecto Interdiocesano de Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (Remhi Project, Interdiocesan Project for the Recuperation of Historical Memory) and the CEH. That is, they agree that an estimated 200,000 died or were disappeared and that the military and its proxies, most significantly the PACs, committed over 90% of tens of thousands of human rights violations. Notably, the CEH also concluded that the military had committed acts of genocide against particular indigenous communities in the early 1980s. This is the human rights community's truth, and this is what they are talking about when they call for the past to be remembered. Conservatives' truth is quite distinct and focuses on the guerrilla's crimes. An additional element of conservatives' truth is that, while they do not necessarily deny that the military committed violations—indeed, they talk quite calmly about crimes against humanity—they deny that genocide was committed in Guatemala. The denial of genocide became increasingly loud in the 2010s, and represents not a shift in the discursive framework, but a strong challenge to the human rights community's truth and narrative of the conflict. Both groups, to be sure, insist on the truth of their truth and refuse to cede space to alternate narratives.

In El Salvador, there is no common discursive framework. Instead, the human rights community and conservatives each have their own discourse which compete against each other in the public sphere. In this, conservatives have the upper hand; more often than not, the mainstream media and political, social, and economic elite support the conservative agenda. In terms of the place of the past in the present, conservatives, led by members of ARENA, have come to settle on a discourse rooted in the benefits of forgetting; they have loudly and repeatedly celebrated the work forgetting does in achieving reconciliation and non-repetition, a forgetting they believe will be achieved via amnesty. The human rights community, on the other hand, sees forgetting as doing little more than promoting impunity, and even repetition; instead of forgetting, they declare that only by knowing the truth of the conflict will repetition be prevented. Truth, they declare, works toward non-repetition. This truth-centered discourse is El Salvador's counterdiscourse, one that refuses to let conservatives' dominant discourse of forgetting be the only option heard in the public sphere. This discursive environment where truth

challenges forgetting does not mean that talk of memory is absent in El Salvador. Indeed, there have been calls for memory from the first days of the post-Peace era; much like in Guatemala, the role of memory is stated to be preventing repetition.

In El Salvador's public discourse, as in Guatemala's, a range of truths or historical narratives survive. And as in Guatemala, the human rights community's truth assigns responsibility in much the same way that the Salvadoran Truth Commission did. Thus, for the human rights community, the military and paramilitary organizations were overwhelmingly responsible for human rights violations. This is their truth of the war, a truth which is also often described as historical memory or memory. Conservatives, on the other hand, insist without actually mentioning it by name that the Truth Commission's truth, and so that of the human rights community, is partial; it is incomplete and biased. Instead, they embrace a truth which emphasizes the FMLN's violations and which ignores and silences the military's crimes. These are the competing truths/narratives of the war. Until 2009, conservatives' narrative certainly dominated the public sphere. With Funes' election, however, the human rights community's discourse and truth received a boost, as they became the official, presidential narrative of the war. Yet despite the change in the truth the president speaks, there is no space for another narrative of the war in either conservatives' nor the human rights community's understanding of the conflict.

Comparing the ways the past is talked about in the public sphere in Guatemala and El Salvador reveals the differences in two countries which are often seen as having suffered from similar Cold War era conflicts that both ended with UN-brokered Peace Accords that did little to address the immediate and more historic causes of the conflicts. As well, today, and ever since the Peace Accords were signed, the two countries have been drowning in violence, much of it related to narcotrafficking and gangs, and impunity. Yet despite the similarities in past (and present) violence, it is important to remember that the two countries have very different ways of dealing with that violence. These differences reveal the relative strength and weakness of different sectors in the two countries and their ability to dictate the terms of the debate. The comparison also highlights the uniqueness of each country's approach to the past.

The issue of truth is essential to societies transitioning out of periods of conflict, though what exactly these societies are transitioning *to* is frequently unclear since "peace" is often full of conflict and can be just as violent as the pre-peace was. In El Salvador and Guatemala, as in

many other places, determining the truth of what happened is seen (perhaps especially by international brokers and facilitators, but also by the domestic human rights community and its allies) as an essential item on the agenda of those negotiating peace agreements and involved in other transition processes. Truth and other similar historical commissions are created to answer the question of what *really* happened during the conflict. The issue of the truth, however, is not so easily resolved, as conservatives in both Guatemala and El Salvador reject the truth that these commissions revealed and instead use all the means at their disposal to promote their own truth of what happened. Truth commissions are certainly not the only initiatives that work in favor of one truth; monuments, commemorations, public declarations, ads taken out in the media, protests, and demonstrations are among the other platforms conservatives, the human rights community, and the now demobilized guerrilla use to make their truth known. As a result, the two societies have witnessed struggles over the truth of the past since the reports were published (and even long before this) and different sectors have consistently promoted their truth as the one and only truth of the past.

Yet there is a danger to insisting that there can only be one truth (or narrative or memory), especially in regard to the goals of reconciliation and non-repetition.⁴⁹ Critics of truth commissions highlight some of the dangers of these truth-finding projects, criticisms that can be extended to other projects rooted in the idea of a unitary truth. Critics highlight the way that truth commissions merely offer a different official narrative of the past than the one that previously existed. While this new narrative, this new truth generally coincides to a greater extent with how the majority lived past conflicts, it still excludes the memories and truths of those who lived the conflicts differently. Truth commissions, therefore, seek to determine what people remember and believe to be the truth. Drawing on Michel Foucault's idea of counter-memories, truth commissions can be seen as turning counter-memory (i.e., the victims' and the opposition's

⁴⁹ There can be no question that especially non-repetition will be best be achieved by economic and political reforms, and most significantly land reform. Structural injustice, especially related to land, was addressed in both the Guatemalan and Salvadoran Peace Accords. As well, the CEH recognized structural injustice as a key cause of the conflict and so made a series of recommendations related to this, many of which had already been agreed on in the Peace Accords. In El Salvador, the Truth Commission limited itself to recommending reforms to the judiciary, military, and security apparatus, though the commissioners did also declare their support for the reforms put forward in the Peace Accords. Addressing the structural causes of the conflicts is essential to guaranteeing non-repetition. This project, however, begins not from the question of how to reconcile the two countries and guarantee non-repetition, but from the question of the work memory and forgetting, and related terms, are tasked with doing. The issues of reconciliation and non-repetition are, therefore, discussed in relation to memory and forgetting, and not in relation to other ways that these will be achieved.

memory) into memory, thereby converting what had been memory (i.e., the military and political elite's memory) into counter-memory. For critics, substituting one group's truth as "the truth of the past" with another group's truth, as truth commissions do, is counterproductive, doing little more than creating new counter-memories, new silences, which will likely pose a threat to the nation in the future.⁵⁰ Thus, projects in El Salvador, Guatemala, and elsewhere that promote the existence of one truth, leaving little space for even an acknowledgement that other truths exist, can actually work against the goals of reconciliation and non-repetition. Paul Ricoeur's work about amnesties and national unity is relevant here. He wrote that, as useful as it might be to pass amnesties and affirm what he describes as an imaginary national unity, doing so "condemn[s] competing memories to an unhealthy underground existence."⁵¹ One way forward for societies transitioning from periods of violence is, as Priscilla B. Hayner proposes, to "com[e] to a generally agreed understanding of a country's history and past wrongs" based on agreement about the truth of "fundamental facts."⁵² Thus, it would be constructive, and contribute to a deeper transition, for societies to write a history that incorporates different groups' contradictory memories, rather than excluding and delegitimizing them.

I argue that, in response to the question of whether it is best for societies emerging from periods of violence to remember or purposefully forget, it is very important to remember the past; the past must be remembered, but it should not be framed as being the one and only truth, while other truths are delegitimized and imagined, presumably, as lies. There must be, as Hayner argued, some basic agreement on the events of the past, but the idea that there is only one truth of the past must be questioned. A country's narrative of the past, if it is to be the foundation of a new reconciled nation, a nation at peace, a nation where a repetition of past wrong is highly unlikely, must recognize a diversity of experiences. This narrative must not work to exclude; rather, it must find a way to include. But more than this, the focus in transitional societies and of transitional justice mechanisms, including truth commissions, must be *reconciling*. It is an active

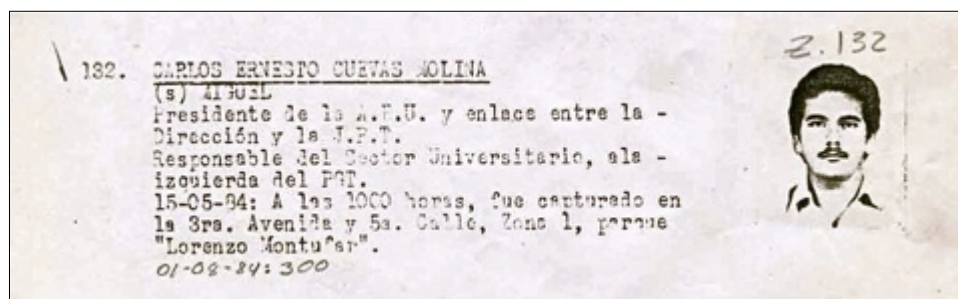
⁵⁰ Maria G. Cattell and Jacob J. Climo, "Meaning in Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives," in *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, eds. Jacob J. Climo and Maria G. Cattell (New York: Altamira Press, 2002), 32-3. Much of this discussion about truth commissions draws on research done for my Master's thesis, "Truth and Forgetting in Guatemala: An Examination of *Memoria del Silencio* and *Nunca Mas*."

⁵¹ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 452-3.

⁵² Priscilla B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 160 and 163

process and involves reconciling both people and stories so that they can co-exist. In this view, the process—i.e., the discussion and debates, and how to discuss and debate in a productive (and not destructive) way—involved in figuring out what the "generally agreed understanding" of the past is and which facts are the fundamentally important ones is more significant for reconciliation than the results of that process. And it is precisely as the social body is screaming that the process of reconciling people and memories—of untangling the different strands of memory which have been knotted for decades⁵³—can be most effective, for it is at these moments that narratives of the past are written. This will not happen overnight, and it will require much work. That it will happen at all might be overly optimistic, but in the meantime, open dialogue about the past is essential. Salvadorans and Guatemalans must talk openly about what happened, instead of accusing those with a different truth of being wrong and trying to drown the nation in another war.

Returning to Cuevas Molina, activists' search for knowing what happened to him and other Guatemalans and Salvadorans was largely unsuccessful during the conflicts. However, at least in Cuevas Molina's case and that of 182 others, what happened was revealed by the publication of the *Diario Militar*, or Death Squad Dossier, smuggled out of Guatemala in 1999. The *Diario Militar* is a list compiled by Military Intelligence of the names, pseudonyms, and photos (taken from the identity documents of the targets) of 183 of the Guatemalan military's many thousands of victims; it reveals extensive surveillance of political and other organizations, as well as the fate of the 183 individuals named. Seeking, it seems, to conceal its responsibility



Source: National Security Archive.

⁵³ This mention of the social body screaming and knots is in reference to Steve Stern's idea of memory knots, which will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

for the range of illegal activities in which it was involved, Military Intelligence used codes to describe what had happened. Penciled below the type-written information about Cuevas Molina's abduction at 10 am on 15 May 1984 in Guatemala City's Zona 1, on the 3a Avenida and 5a Calle, are a series of numbers: 01-08-84: 300. Cuevas Molina was assassinated on 1 August 1984, almost three months after he was captured. Unfortunately, and despite the non-stop efforts of organizations dedicated to the task of finding the dead and disappeared, the whereabouts of his and most others' remains are still a mystery.⁵⁴ And it is precisely because this mystery remains that El Salvador and Guatemala's journeys down the Calle del Olvido have not been and will not be smooth and free from reminders that something happened in the past which must be addressed and worked through, not painted over as if it had never happened, as if the dead and disappeared had never existed.

Sources

In her masterful work, *Reckoning: The Ends of War in Guatemala*, Diane Nelson speaks of *engaño* (duplicity) and being two-faced. She writes about a conversation she had with a catechist in Patzulá, a small community near Joyabaj, Quiché. The catechist told her he had also been the leader of the PACs in the community. He said, " 'I have two faces' 'One I show to the army, the other I show to my people.' "⁵⁵ After hearing numerous declarations like this and other stories that make a similar point, Nelson wonders who was being duped? She writes, "In one case, when it thought it made the catechist work for them, the army couldn't see his second face. In the other [case, when, as Doña Miguella told Nelson, the "bad" people in the community " 'would tell the army that someone was a guerrilla when they were not' " to settle an often long-standing disagreement or to get "a little bit of land"], as bad people tricked [the army] into acting for them, [the military] didn't see how they were being used for very local ends."⁵⁶ Though this dissertation does not address the issue of *engaño*, the idea that people have two (or more) faces is important. In the range of sources consulted for this dissertation, which are discussed below, I

⁵⁴ Kate Doyle, "Guatemalan Death Squad Dossier: Internal Military Log Reveals Fate of 183 'Disappeared,' " *National Security Archive*, 20 May 1999, <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB15/>; Kate Doyle, "Death Squad Dossier: Guatemalan Military Logbook of the Disappeared," *National Security Archive*, 1 July 2008, <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/guatemala/logbook/index.htm>.

⁵⁵ Diane M. Nelson, *Reckoning: The Ends of War in Guatemala* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 13-4.

⁵⁶ Nelson, *Reckoning*, 171-2.

explore the face people choose to show to the public, the statements and declarations they choose to make. Their other face(s) remain hidden.

Research for this dissertation was conducted over the course of several trips to Guatemala and El Salvador. Much of that time was spend in the two countries' *hemerotecas*, or newspaper archives, leafing through newspapers since 1996 and 1992, respectively. The newspapers will be discussed in greater depth below. Another significant written source consisted of the publications of human rights and other organizations and government institutions related to the conflicts, as well as their webpages or social media pages. *Testimonios* and (auto)biographies of those who participated in the conflicts or peace negotiations, as well as other works they have written, form a final component of the written sources consulted. As for non-written sources, or at least sources not written on paper, I observed protests, demonstrations, trials, and commemorations; visited the exhumation at Guatemala City's La Verbena cemetery, various monuments related to the conflicts in both countries, and both countries' military museums; and spent time walking around Guatemala City and San Salvador, appreciating the work of street artists and mural painters. I also conducted formal interviews and had more informal conversations with 31 human rights activists, former military officers, academics, and journalists.⁵⁷

The selection of which sources and whose words to draw on was partially inspired by Gramsci's discussion of intellectuals. Gramsci explains that the struggle between different social groups for dominance is at least in part a struggle about ideology, a struggle between different groups' intellectuals. For one group to become dominant, the other group's intellectuals must be "conquer[ed]" and "assimilat[ed]." Gramsci located the political party as heavily involved in much of this process, for the party "is responsible for welding together the organic intellectuals of a given group—the dominant one—and the traditional intellectuals."⁵⁸ While the latter seem to always have existed, despite dramatic changes in politics and society, the "organic" intellectuals are new, like the group they belong to. Gramsci explains that as new social groups were created, new groups of intellectuals were "organically" created alongside them to give each group "homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in

⁵⁷ These conversations were fascinating, provided much insight into both countries, and helped me frame my approach to the invetsigation. That said, most of what was said in these conversations is not a formal part of this dissertation. This is largely because I conducted the interviews very early on in my investigation and had not yet narrowed my research enough to be able to take advantage of the opportunity.

⁵⁸ Antonio Gramsci, "The Intellectuals," in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, eds. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 15.

the social and political fields."⁵⁹ While traditional intellectuals may have fulfilled their role by simply speaking, by orating, this was not enough for new intellectuals. Rather, the new intellectuals were actively involved in "practical life, as constructor, organiser, 'permanent persuader.' "⁶⁰

Certainly some of these intellectuals fit into what Tani Adams describes, in the case of Guatemala at least, as the "cosmopolitan network." In Guatemala, this network "came to play a definitive role in determining the course of the post-war era, especially in the fields of governance, cultural, and socio-economic policy and practice, and the respective roles of civil society and the state." The network includes Guatemalan and international actors, including intellectuals, members of "certain [religious] dominations," activists, journalists, the staff of donor and international agencies, the members of Guatemalan and international NGOs, "some graduate students and international scholars," and some members of the guerrilla. While Adams dates the formation of this network to during the conflict, the network really expanded and took root during the peace negotiations and in the years after the signing of the Peace. Members were heavily involved in the CEH and Remhi Project, have "led the implementation of post-war social initiatives in the fields of transitional justice, human rights, and state reform and social reform, and have generated much of the academic and NGO research on the critical social processes that have occurred in recent decades."⁶¹ Adams recognizes that "[v]irtually none" of the members of the cosmopolitan network worked in government during the war. In the post-Peace era, however, some "began to move more fluidly in and out of government positions," though they have often maintained a certain level of distrust for the state.⁶²

Adams adds to her discussion by acknowledging the distance that exists in terms of post-Peace needs and issues between members of the cosmopolitan network and those "on the ground." She traces this to the emergence of professional NGOs, which have largely replaced the "mainly volunteer organizations of the past led by grassroots leaders who never expected to live off of their social commitments." The professional, often national, organizations rely almost completely on international funding to operate (as does, Adams points out, the state). Funding is

⁵⁹ Gramsci, "The Intellectuals," 5.

⁶⁰ Gramsci, "The Intellectuals," 9-10.

⁶¹ Tani Marilena Adams, *Cumulative Impact Case Study: Consumed by Violence: Advances and Obstacles to Building Peace in Guatemala Fifteen Years After the Peace Accords* (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, April 2011), 11.

⁶² Adams, *Consumed by Violence*, 11-2.

neither constant nor guaranteed, and reliance on it shapes the "agenda" of both the state and NGOs.⁶³ Adams uses organizations that work "in the 'peace' or 'transitional justice' field" to demonstrate her point. While NGOs tend to believe that an essential step on the path to peace is justice, a belief that seems "natural" to them and that allows them to receive international funding, community members who lived the conflict might disagree.⁶⁴ Despite potential community opposition, internationally-funded professional organizations, nevertheless, push for justice, imposing an external framework of post-Peace reconciliation and social reconstruction on complex and diverse local situations.

Kirsten Weld's work on the Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional (AHPN, Historic Archive of the National Police) certainly highlights the importance of international support, though she does not discuss how international funding might reproduce or further the divide between community and professional organizations in great detail. Given the non-existence of state resources, she describes the AHPN as "dependent...upon international funding and political capital."⁶⁵ She added that, due to this dependence, projects were "to some extent, inflected with the donors' priorities." In the case of the AHPN, the projects the international community was willing to fund were related to human rights issues and justice, not straightforward archival projects.⁶⁶ As Åsa Wallton of the Swedish International Development Agency told Weld, "Funding depends on the sexiness of the project," and archives were not sexy. Human rights "discoveries," however, were.⁶⁷ The AHPN, therefore, was only able to secure funding by framing the archive as a human rights project. Both Weld and Adams' comments should be kept in mind, but the existence of international pressure or distance between activists and communities does not negate what these individuals and organizations say, nor their inclusion in this project.

The situation of intellectuals and members of something which might occasionally resemble a network of activists in El Salvador is quite a different matter. Margaret Popkin and Ralph Sprenkels have both written on the issue of Salvadoran civil society and human rights organizations. They agree that post-Peace civil society is quite weak, especially those

⁶³ Adams, *Consumed by Violence*, 50 and 12.

⁶⁴ Adams, *Consumed by Violence*, 50.

⁶⁵ Kirsten A. Weld, "Reading the Politics of History in Guatemala's National Police Archives" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2010), 448.

⁶⁶ Weld, "Reading the Politics of History in Guatemala's National Police Archives," 437-8.

⁶⁷ Weld, "Reading the Politics of History in Guatemala's National Police Archives," 86

organizations which (barely) survived the end of the Civil War. Both authors tie this weakness to the FMLN. Popkin describes the weakness of civil society organizations as a result of the strength of the FMLN and the initial post-Peace presence of the Misión de Observadores de las Naciones Unidas en El Salvador (ONUSAL, United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador), in addition to a lack of financial and technical resources. ONUSAL, she writes, "reinforced an unhealthy tendency toward dependence on international actors"; this, in some ways, hijacked human rights work. The strength of the FMLN, she argues, also limited the independence of some organizations,⁶⁸ bringing to mind Gramsci's comments about the importance of political parties in struggles about ideology or, more particularly, ideas about the past.

Sprenkels' work adds depth to the subject, and especially the relationship between the decline of human rights organizations and the FMLN.⁶⁹ He argues that links between human rights groups and the FMLN existed during the Civil War; they were, he said, a "public secret," but one which was not widely known internationally, lest the credibility of these organizations be undermined. Many organizations were, in fact, part of the FMLN's political strategy and "provided important political leverage, improved the climate for political opposition and peace negotiations and channeled international pressure and support."⁷⁰ Yet while the FMLN used human rights organizations, such as the various mothers' committees and the Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador (CDHES, Human Rights Commission of El Salvador), to increase national and international support, the guerrilla did also commit a number of human rights violations, violations which human rights organizations often ignored or denied as a result of their loyalty to the FMLN. This loyalty to the FMLN, Sprenkels suggests, had a negative impact on the human rights movement's credibility.⁷¹ As well, during the peace negotiations, unlike in Guatemala, the FMLN focused negotiations on the political system. Human rights organizations were sidelined in negotiations and Sprenkels hints that the FMLN did not want an "active human rights movement." Indeed, he argues that the FMLN believed that the Peace

⁶⁸ Margaret Popkin, *Peace without Justice: Obstacles to Building the Rule of Law in El Salvador* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 161-2 and 193.

⁶⁹ It must be remembered, however, that the FMLN was made up of a handful of different organizations that came together for the sake of convenience and increased strength. Different organizations, in fact, had connections to different factions of the FMLN, and not directly to the FMLN itself. Keeping this in mind, the FMLN will be used here.

⁷⁰ Ralph Sprenkels, *The Price of Peace: The Human Rights Movement in Postwar El Salvador* (Amsterdam: Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation, 2005), 56 and 63.

⁷¹ Sprenkels, *The Price of Peace*, 71-5.

Accords made human rights organizations "obsolete" for, once the war was over, certainly human rights would no longer be violated.⁷² In the post-Peace era, as Sprenkels points out, human rights organizations have thus felt rather like orphans, abandoned by those who had previously supported them. Without the support of the FMLN or any other political party, and also without access to the media and without very much international support, these organizations have simply tried to survive, to continue working. They have found it difficult to do so not only because of the lack of support, but also because they had a difficult time adapting to the new Salvadoran reality, a reality where, Sprenkels argues, it seemed that human rights were unimportant.⁷³ The human rights community in El Salvador, except those with ties to the Jesuit's Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas" (UCA, Central American University "José Simeón Cañas"), is far more modest than the human rights community in Guatemala. This is even more true with the Church's 2013 closing of Tutela Legal. Members of the Salvadoran human rights community have not served in government, and they certainly do not include individuals like former president of Guatemala's Congress Nineth Montenegro or Nobel Peace Prize Winner Rigoberta Menchú.

The situation of the human rights community is, therefore, quite different in the two countries, as is the political environment in which they operate. Yet in terms of the place of the past in the present and future, the human rights community in both Guatemala and El Salvador locates itself in opposition to conservatives, and members speak, write, and act hoping to convince the societies they belong to of what they are saying. Much of this discussion about the past takes place in newspapers, and they are one of the sources used most often in this dissertation. This broader category of newspapers includes paid ads taken out by a range of individuals and organizations; more straightforward (though never entirely straightforward, as will be seen below) news stories that often contain quotes from politicians, judges, and members of government; and opinion pieces written by editors and other commentators, many of whom have weekly columns in the various papers. Reading pieces written by the same individuals week after week, year after year is indispensable in understanding the conversations that take place in the public sphere. Reading 15 or 20 years of newspapers and opinion pieces allows the reader to

⁷² Sprenkels, *The Price of Peace*, 81-8.

⁷³ Sprenkels, *The Price of Peace*, 79-81 and 90. A member of the CDHES suggested to the author that part of the reason why Salvadoran NGOs have difficulty getting funding from international donors, specifically compared to Guatemala, is that indigenous issues and genocide sell. Civil War does not. (29 May 2012).

understand the different commentators' general ideological tendencies and to observe ideas and truths doing battle as commentators respond to statements others made in their own opinion pieces, as seen in the political cartoon below. Political cartoonist, José Manuel Chacón, better



Source: *Siglo Veintiuno*. 17 March 2000.

known as Filóchofo, responds to pro-military, conservative commentators Karen Escaler and Alfred Kaltschmitt's description of the Guatemalan army as "victorious." He asks them if there is anything victorious about the fact that, "of the 24 remains found in the last exhumation [in the department of Chichicastenango]...10 were girls and boys, 11 were women, 2 were elderly."⁷⁴

A brief exploration of select Guatemalan and Salvadoran newspapers, as well as the general climate in which journalists and commentators write, is useful. It is important to keep in mind, however, that in neither El Salvador nor Guatemala are newspapers the most commonly

⁷⁴ On the left side of the cartoon, running up and down, Filóchofo added, "Historically....the army has never defended the sovereignty of the country...the only thing that has been defended are the interests of small groups of power."

accessed source for information. Rather, the television is.⁷⁵ Yet, as Centro Civitas reported, "in countries like Guatemala," which surely includes El Salvador, printed media "still dictate the agenda" of non-print media.⁷⁶ Newspapers, therefore, shape opinion significantly, as Saénz de Tejada wrote about Guatemala, and as will become clear in El Salvador.

A 2008 study by the United Nations Development Project (UNDP) offers some revealing information about how the media works in Guatemala. How the mainstream media operates, according to the UNDP is "free enough." There are no laws to prevent the free circulation of information, nor does the government use "official advertisements as a way to limit the spread of information." However, how information is selected and how it is processed is not "totally free." What information the media reports on is not only determined, or indeed limited, by the editorial staff's political ideology and by how particular information might affect the newspaper's revenue, but also by the fact that the newspaper, "as a social agent, when it enters into contact with the reality in which it functions, finds itself subject to a series of forces," four of which are more important than the others: the owners or investors, political agents, the (most often self-interested) sources, and the audience.⁷⁷ These all set the limits of what is and is not written about in a newspaper. Thus, the report concluded, "private interests" still determine freedom of expression, and these interests are most often tied to media owners, to corporate interests, or to other groups that influence the contents of the media.⁷⁸

Many who write or comment about the Guatemalan media, including many who are journalists themselves, are highly critical of it. Journalist Marielos Monzón, for example, pointed to many of the same issues as the UNDP, but also added more depth to the discussion. Monzón, a columnist with *Prensa Libre*, commented not only that ownership of the media is concentrated in a very few hands, but that "freedom of expression is threatened" because the "media's agenda

⁷⁵ Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, *Guatemala, ¿Una Economía al Servicio del Desarrollo Humano? Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2007/2008*, Volume I (Guatemala: Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2008), 511; see also, Lawrence Michael Ladutke, *Freedom of Expression in El Salvador: The Struggle for Human Rights and Democracy* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2004).

⁷⁶ Centro Civitas, "Guatemala, El Silencio de la Memoria: El Informe de la CEH en los Medios de Comunicación," in *La Persistencia de la Verdad: A Diez Años del Informe de la CEH*, eds. Impunity Watch y Convergencia por los Derechos Humanos (Guatemala: Editorial Serviprensa, 2009), 23.

⁷⁷ Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, *Guatemala*, 516 and 506.

⁷⁸ Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, *Guatemala*, 527. Chappell Lawson and Sallie Hughes agreed. In a study about freedom of the press in 2002, where a higher number means there is less freedom, Guatemala scored 49, while El Salvador got 35; Chappell Lawson and Sallie Hughes, "Latin American's Postauthoritarian Media," in *(Un)Civil Societies: Human Rights and Democratic Transitions in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, eds. Rachel A. May and Andrew K. Milton (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 172.

is constructed—almost unanimously—based on one way of seeing and understanding the world," a way that almost completely reflects the perspectives and values of those who have traditionally had economic and political power. Other sectors, views, beliefs, etc., are made invisible. And, she added, this is not very different from other sectors; the same concentration that is clear in media ownership can also be seen in land ownership, industrial and agricultural production, and the financial and services sectors. While those who own the means of communication are not always the same as those who control the financial sector, they are certainly from the same "social class" and so, for the most part, share the same outlook on the world.⁷⁹

Filóchofo, fired by *Siglo Veintiuno* in 2001, agreed. In an interview in *El Periódico*, a newspaper he would soon work for, he stated that he believed he had been fired for ideological reasons. *Siglo Veintiuno*, he said, supported neoliberal policies and his cartoons "contradict the ideas and the discourse of the free market." He added, echoing Monzón, that Guatemalan newspapers had historically been unable to allow space for different opinions and voices. Part of the reason for this, and another part of the reason he believed he had been fired, is that advertisers and owners pressure editors to control content; after all, an oil company would be unlikely to want to advertise in a newspaper that also published critiques of oil companies.⁸⁰ Newspapers are privately owned and operate on a for-profit basis,⁸¹ much of which comes from advertising; as a result, keeping advertisers happy is essential to the newspaper's existence. Editors and journalists must try not to criticize or offend advertisers.⁸²

In Guatemala, the newspapers explored for this dissertation are *Prensa Libre*, *Siglo Veintiuno*, and *El Periódico*. *Prensa Libre*, founded in 1951 by those openly opposed to the Arbenz regime, is by far the most read of the three and, according to Monzón, is the most influential. It is owned by Grupo Prensa Libre, which also owns *Nuestro Diario*, the most read, but far more sensational, newspaper in the country. The Grupo Prensa Libre as a whole controlled 82% of the market between April and June 2007. Centro Civitas reported an average daily printing of 126,000, distributed throughout the country, in 2009. Prensalibre.com also is the

⁷⁹ Marielos Monzón, "Con los Mismos Anteojos," in *¿Por Qué Nos Odian Tanto? Estado y Medios de Comunicación en América Latina*, ed. Omar Rincón (Bogotá: Centro de Competencia en Comunicación para América Latina and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010), 55-7.

⁸⁰ Luis Urrutia, "Filóchofo: tinta peligrosa," *El Periódico*, 14 January 2001.

⁸¹ Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, *Guatemala*, 507.

⁸² Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, *Guatemala*, 514-5.

most visited of Guatemala's online newspapers, with 58,000 visits per day.⁸³ *Siglo Veintiuno*, founded in 1990 by a group of businessmen, is owned by the Corporación de Noticias, S.A. and prints a daily average of 26,000 issues, most of which are distributed in Guatemala City. The newspaper is considered to voice the views of the business and conservative religious sectors, such as Opus Dei. From April to June 2007, the Corporación de Noticias, which also owns the newspaper *Al Día*, controlled 9% of the market.⁸⁴ Finally, *El Periódico* was first published in November 1996 after journalist José Rubén Zamora and others split from *Siglo Veintiuno*. Aldea Global, S.A., which Zamora is president of, currently owns the newspaper. Between April and June of 2007, Aldea Global controlled 5% of the market.⁸⁵ It should also be noted that the media in Guatemala is further concentrated in the hands of the Marroquín family, members of which head *Prensa Libre*, *Siglo Veintiuno*, and *La Hora*, another daily. Rick Rockwell and Noreene Janus, who study the media in Central America, describe the situation in Guatemala as a media oligarchy. A dozen families control non-print media, while nine families dominate all of Guatemala's newspapers and 99% of the circulation. These same families also own the main industries in Guatemala and many are large-scale landowners.⁸⁶

The situation is hardly better in El Salvador; indeed, Chappell Lawson and Sallie Hughes argue that the average Latin American "gets information about politics from oligopolistic systems characterized by concentrated ownership, collusion between owners and political elites, tabloidization, and spotty journalistic standards."⁸⁷ This idea of oligopoly is certainly true in the case of El Salvador, as it was in Guatemala. As well, in El Salvador levels of collusion are high. According to the United Nations, *El Diario de Hoy* and *La Prensa Gráfica*, both of which were

⁸³ The Grupo Prensa Libre is also involved in television through Guatevisión. Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, *Guatemala*, 509-11; Centro Civitas, "Guatemala, El Silencio de la Memoria," 24; and Monzón, "Con los Mismos Anteojos," 57.

⁸⁴ Centro Civitas, "Guatemala, El Silencio de la Memoria," 24; Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, *Guatemala*, 510-1; and Monzón, "Con los Mismos Anteojos," 58.) Sixty percent of *Siglo Veintiuno* is now owned by Costa Rica's *La Nación*; Guillermo Mastrini and Martín Becerra, *Los Monopolios de la Verdad: Descifrando la Estructura y Concentración de los Medios en Centroamérica y República Dominicana* (Prometeo Libros: Buenos Aires, 2009), 108-109.

⁸⁵ Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, *Guatemala*, 509-11; Monzón, "Con los Mismos Anteojos," 58; and Mastrini and Becerra, *Los Monopolios de la Verdad*, 108-109. In 2010, when Monzón's investigation of the media in Guatemala was published, Gonzalo Marroquín Godoy was the managing editor of *Prensa Libre*, Juan Carlos and Luis Marroquín Godoy were in charge of the company which owns *Siglo Veintiuno*, and Oscar Clemente Marroquín Godoy and his sons own *La Hora*, another of Guatemala's leading newspapers. (Monzón, "Con los Mismos Anteojos," 57-8 and Mastrini and Becerra, *Los Monopolios de la Verdad*, 100-1.)

⁸⁶ Mastrini and Becerra, *Los Monopolios de la Verdad*, 108-9.

⁸⁷ Lawson and Hughes, "Latin American's Postauthoritarian Media," 163.

consulted for this investigation, control 87% of the market. Both print approximately 100,000 copies per day and are closely tied with the political right, and in particular with ARENA. The remaining 13% is controlled by the leftist *Diario Co-Latino*, which was one of the sources for this dissertation, and *Diario el Mundo*.⁸⁸ In addition to so few papers circulating, ownership of the media is highly concentrated. *La Prensa Gráfica* is owned by the Dutriz family, which also owns the third most read newspaper in the country, while *El Diario de Hoy* is owned by the Altamirano family, which also owns the fourth most read newspaper. Both belong to El Salvador's "fourteen families" who have traditionally controlled wealth in the country, and both are connected to the political right. For example, as journalist Carlos Martínez, of the online investigative and not right-leaning newspaper *El Faro*, noted, the most recent editors-in-chief of *La Prensa Gráfica* have had close relationships with the presidency.⁸⁹

In his analysis of the influence of the media in politics, Lawrence Michael Ladutke paints a rather grim picture of the situation in El Salvador. He argues that ARENA was able to win election after election in part by instilling fear in voters, and so in newspaper readers, about the consequences of voting for the FMLN. Journalists wrote about the terrible things that Salvadorans would suffer if the FMLN won. This was combined with these newspapers' refusal to publicize events the human rights community organized, their insistence on charging these organizations higher advertising rates, and a very obvious bias in favor of those who had violated human rights both during the Civil War and after.⁹⁰ These helped ensure ARENA's electoral victories, as did the fact that death squads continued to operate, especially in the early post-Peace era, using threats and violence to prevent the full enjoyment of freedom of expression.⁹¹

Sonja Wolf's view on the Salvadoran media is only a bit less dire. Wolf acknowledged that the post-Peace era was characterized by greater freedom of expression and greater plurality. Ownership and audience, however, are still highly concentrated and the main media outlets, most notably *El Diario de Hoy* and *La Prensa Gráfica*, but also the country's telecommunications giant, Telecorporación Salvadoreña, do not question the conservative status quo; rather, they support it and ARENA wholeheartedly. The media, thus, continues to protect elite interests, as

⁸⁸ Ricardo Valencia, "La Estrategia del Cambio," in *¿Por Qué Nos Odian Tanto? Estado y Medios de Comunicación en América Latina*, ed. Omar Rincón (Bogotá: Centro de Competencia en Comunicación para América Latina and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010), 116; Ladutke, *Freedom of Expression in El Salvador*, 70-1 and 82.

⁸⁹ Mastrini and Becerra, *Los Monopolios de la Verdad*, 88-9.

⁹⁰ Ladutke, *Freedom of Expression in El Salvador*, 80-3 and 109.

⁹¹ Ladutke, *Freedom of Expression in El Salvador*, 54-9.

they did during the Civil War, allowing only a narrow range of voices and perspectives to be heard, creating a "homogeneous, uncritical and biased coverage." This is especially true during elections, when conservative media outlets transform into what Wolf describes as "party mouthpieces." While "open censorship" no longer exists, businesses and the government use advertising dollars to manipulate what the media does and does not report. As well, while *La Prensa Gráfica*'s journalists "enjoy relative independence and encounter limits only when the owners consider their social and economic status to be threatened," the owner of *El Diario de Hoy* "exercises internal censorship" and writes the newspaper's daily editorial column. Wolf concluded, drawing on the work of Sallie Hughes, that an "authoritarian news model" exists in El Salvador, where the interests of the owners, the government, and the private sector converge, silencing alternative visions of the world.⁹²

Yet it is not only the Salvadoran right which sees the benefit of having control over the media. Interestingly, since Funes' election in 2009, government control over state media has increased significantly; Funes, a former journalist and popular television presenter, transferred control over the various state media outlets, in particular Canal 10 and Radio Nacional, to the presidency.⁹³ As well, the leftist *Diario Co-Latino*, though it has a smaller circulation than either *Diario de Hoy* or *La Prensa Gráfica*, can hardly be accused of impartiality. The newspaper is often little more than a "party mouthpiece," though for the FMLN instead of ARENA.

The media in El Salvador and Guatemala are, therefore, not the best places to try to collect information about what happened; but they are excellent places to find out what particular sectors believe about what happened, or what those sectors want others to believe, remember, and know. Newspapers, and those who write for them, reproduce and also produce public narratives of the past and the meaning attached to those events; they are, therefore, a useful source for exploring public discourse.⁹⁴ Yet given their limitations, newspapers, and especially

⁹² Sonja Wolf, "Subverting Democracy: Elite Rule and the Limits to Political Participation in Post-War El Salvador," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 41 (2009): 440-2.

⁹³ Valencia, "La Estrategia del Cambio," 119-20.

⁹⁴ Lisa Laplante and Kelly Phenicie's argument about the media and transitional justice in Peru is interesting here. Laplante and Phenicie focus in particular on reporting about the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission and on the trial of former president Alberto Fujimori. They assert that, since the findings of truth commissions and trial proceedings about past human rights violations are often not disseminated except by the media, how the media "frame" stories about the past plays an essential role in shaping collective memory, for, as the "social construction of reality theory" suggests, the media create the meaning of particular events. Lisa J. Laplante and Kelly Phenicie, "Media, Trials and Truth Commissions: 'Mediating' Reconciliation in Peru's Transitional Justice Process," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 4 (2010): 208 and 213-4.

mainstream newspapers, cannot be the only source consulted. Other sources, mentioned above, and most significantly the publications and paid ads of human rights organizations and their allies, are necessary to counter the tendency of the mainstream media to silence other views.

Organization

Chapter One lays out the theoretical framework of this dissertation, with a particular focus on writers who address discourse, memory, and truth. A key aspect of this literature relates to William Roseberry's work on discursive frameworks, and particularly on a common discursive framework, which "sets out the central terms around which and in terms of which contestation and struggle can occur."⁹⁵ Roseberry's discursive framework overlaps with Michel Foucault's regimes of truth, Steve Stern's emblematic memory, and Maurice Halbwach's social frameworks to form the theoretical foundation of this dissertation. These not so different kinds of frameworks help determine what is included in a society's narrative of the past, how these events are talked about, and, significantly, which narratives and memories are understood to be true or untrue.

Chapters Two and Three explore the way the past is talked about in the public sphere in Guatemala. Instead of diving into a discussion of the common discursive framework, Chapter Two focuses on the period immediately following the 29 December 1996 signing of the Peace Accords. More specifically, it looks at how especially conservative politicians pushed for forgetting without actually saying the word. The masking of forgetting began with the passage of the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional (National Reconciliation Law), more often spoken of as the Amnesty Law. Drawing on Ricoeur's discussion of amnesty and amnesia, the chapter explores how the human rights community re-imagined the Amnesty Law as the Law of Forgetting; the issue of reconciliation was largely forgotten. The Amnesty was also spoken of, both by conservatives and members of the human rights community as a law which granted *perdón*, or pardon, which, for human rights activists, then became tangled up in the issue of forgetting. Thus, for the human rights community reconciliation, amnesty, *perdón*, and forgetting were discursively linked. It was, therefore, hardly a leap for the human rights community to understand requests for *perdón* (forgiveness, rather than pardon) as being another way conservatives promoted forgetting behind the façade of something else. This is seen in conservative president Álvaro Arzú's request for *perdón* in December 1998. The chapter

⁹⁵ Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," 360-1.

concludes by returning to the issue of reconciliation. Connections between forgetting and reconciliation have been made throughout the post-Peace era, and point to the importance of the speaker's ideology and past actions when the human rights community tries to understand what speakers *really* mean when they talk about reconciliation.

Chapter Three examines why it is that conservative Guatemalans used reconciliation, amnesty, and *perdón* when they wanted to forget. Why did they not just openly declare that Guatemalans must, in the name of peace, forget the conflict? The reason lies in the existence of a common discursive framework, or emblematic memory. The chapter includes the different truths that can exist within the boundaries of this framework. The chapter concludes with a short comparison between a discourse which declares that memory will prevent repetition, and frequent assertions that the past *is* repeating itself. In a discursive environment where non-repetition is linked to memory, repetition can only happen if there is not enough memory. On the other hand, it points to the insufficiencies of memory itself for preventing repetition and promoting reconciliation.

Chapters Four and Five deal with the public discourse in El Salvador's post-Peace era. Chapter Four explores the lack of a common discursive framework in El Salvador, as mentioned above. Chapter Five explores the presence of memory in the public discourse of El Salvador, for, even though the discourse focuses on truth, talk of memory and historical memory are certainly not absent. The chapter begins with a short discussion of why Salvadorans from diverse ideological or political backgrounds have at least occasionally promoted memory; that is, they have pointed out the way that memory prevents repetition. That said, though conservatives might call for memory from time to time, it is either a memory that does little work or which is quickly buried under calls to forget. As for what different sectors want to be remembered, it is clear, as in Guatemala, that conservatives have quite a different idea about this than the human rights community. For conservatives, the FMLN's crimes must be remembered above all else; the human rights community does not deny FMLN's crimes, but the overwhelming focus is nevertheless on the army's far more numerous crimes. Thus, it is clear that the human rights community understands memory to be roughly the same as the truth revealed in the report of the Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador. This memory/truth is understood to be the equivalent of historical memory, and it is on this truth/memory/historical memory that the new El Salvador must be built. But far more than simply believing that the army's violations must be remembered

to prevent repetition, the human rights community promotes rewriting the historical narrative of the war so that it is centered on the victims and survivors. This is not a passive memory of the war; memory/truth must actively be used to ensure non-repetition. Funes' celebration of 20 years of "Peace" in 2012 lent added weight to the human rights community's discourse, and its version of truth.

Chapter Six focuses on two moments of rupture when the complexities of group membership and the limits of discourse, as well as the process of narrative construction, emerge. In El Salvador, this rupture occurred when the FMLN's Mauricio Funes was elected president in 2009, and even more so when he asked for *perdón* for the El Mozote massacre on the 20th anniversary of the Peace in 2012. His actions related to the past, including his long-awaited/much-dreaded request for *perdón*, provide an opportunity to observe the struggle between truth and forgetting. In these moments and in discussions about them, in the embrace and rejection of Funes' words and actions, the limits and shape of each sector's narrative/truth of the past, are clearly defined. In Guatemala, debates about the 2013 genocide trial against Efraín Ríos Montt and Mauricio Rodríguez Sánchez revealed many of the same things, all contained within the limits of Guatemala's common discursive framework. What emerged very clearly in discussions about the trial and the issue of genocide more broadly is the fuzziness of group membership and how conservatives and the human rights community are not homogeneous and do not all espouse similar beliefs about all-important issues like whether genocide was committed in Guatemala and what role justice has in the post-Peace era. What emerged most clearly in declarations about these topics is that there are things members of the human rights community cannot say—they cannot deny that genocide was committed or that trials are divisive—if they want to continue to belong to that group.

Chapter Seven also includes a discussion of both countries, but does not necessarily focus on the discursive framework in either Guatemala or El Salvador. Rather, the chapter explores exhumations. The right in El Salvador buries the past with their words and in legislation, covering up the truth of what happened, and also has worked to prevent exhumations from being conducted. Yet exhumations have taken place, specifically at El Mozote. The exhumations, which had to overcome many obstacles, generated significant debate as different sectors insisted that the bones confirmed their own version of what had happened. In Guatemala, the focus shifts away from discourse to the dirty process of exhumation. Exhumations, which relatives and the

human rights community request take place, are approved by one of the state's many institutions, and are conducted by non-governmental organizations. The exhumation, identification, and reburial of the dead helps relatives make sense of what happened to loved ones; it helps them to understand what happened so they can lay the bones, and the ghosts of the past, to rest. Exhumations, more often than not, reveal the state's responsibility for human rights violations, which is certainly why many state institutions and their members oppose them. But, even so, exhumations also help the state and its operation. In addition to allowing the state to count and categorize, and based on Michel Foucault's discussion of the art of government, exhumations extend the reach of the state into regions of the country and communities it has long sought to control. It was these communities the state sought to control in its violent counterinsurgency campaigns. Exhumations allow the state to enter into these communities in a much more bureaucratic way: through the filling out of paper work. They involve the state in the lives of its citizens, and citizens into the operation of the state. Given this, the Salvadoran state could benefit from exhumations, though this would first involve revoking the Amnesty Law, and so completely unforgetting that there are bones buried in the soil.

Running throughout all of these chapters is a critique of both the human rights community and conservatives' insistence on the existence of one truth, memory, or narrative of the past. The topic is brought up again in the Conclusion.

Chapter One Theory

Memory is a partial forgetting, in both senses of the word, that is indispensable to making sense of the past. —Tzvetan Todorov¹

There has been keen interest in the topic of memory in the academy since the 1980s. Andreas Huyssen calls this heightened interest in memory "a contemporary obsession"; memory, he writes, "has become a cultural obsession of monumental proportions across the globe."² Pierre Nora and Huyssen suggest a link between the sudden interest in memory and the Holocaust, and specifically the spate of fortieth and fiftieth anniversaries celebrated or commemorated in the 1980s and 1990s.³ Others also point to the Holocaust as a catalyst for the blossoming of memory work in the last decades of the twentieth century, suggesting that many became increasingly concerned that the memory of the Holocaust would die along with its survivors. Indeed, Huyssen describes society as being "somehow in the grips of fear, even a terror, of forgetting." There was, as a result, a memory boom, a rush to remember and record the trauma of the Holocaust.⁴ For Huyssen, the memory boom, and the "fear of oblivion and disappearance," are not solely connected to the Holocaust. Rather, they are directly related to "the information explosion and the marketing of memory." These and other things have the effect of making time seem to be moving far too quickly, making "lived space" seem "fractured," and altering the relationship between the past, present, and future "beyond recognition." Thus, we feel a very keen need to "anchor ourselves" in time using memory and commemoration, even though we know full well that, as Huyssen writes, "such strategies of memorialization may in the end themselves be transitory and incomplete."⁵

¹ Tzvetan Todorov, *Hope and Memory: Lessons from the Twentieth Century*, trans. by David Bellos (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 127.

² Andreas Huyssen, "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia" in *Globalization*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 62-3.

³ Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, Volume 1: Conflicts and Divisions*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Huyssen, "Present Pasts," 2000; and Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

⁴ Peter Gray and Kendrick Oliver, "The Memory of Catastrophe," *History Today* 51 (2001), 13; Huyssen, "Present Pasts," 2001, 65.

⁵ Huyssen, "Present Pasts," 2001, 65 and 75-6. Huyssen makes the connection to the *desaparecidos*, the disappeared, the victims of dictatorship in Latin America by declaring that both cases "share the absence of a proper burial site so key to the nurturing of human memory."

The memory boom did not simply inspire people to safeguard memory; it also produced a significant body of literature on, as Nietzsche might have described it, the "use and abuse of memory." The literature about memory is extensive, and much of it is not directly related to the topic under investigation. The focus here will be on ideas and writings that form the theoretical backbone of this dissertation. Though some of these ideas (most significantly the work of William Roseberry, which is discussed first) are not specifically about memory, as vaguely as it might be understood, taken together they form an interconnected framework which is used to explore how people talk about the past and its role in post-Peace El Salvador and Guatemala. This chapter begins by exploring ideas and discussions about the discursive/memory/social/truth frameworks that determine how issues are talked about in the public sphere, what is remembered or forgotten, and what is understood to be true or untrue. These not so different kinds of frameworks help determine what is included in a society's narrative of the past, which is the next issue discussed. An examination of the opposition, or links, between forgetting and memory follows the discussion about narratives, for those things that the dominant discursive/memory/social/truth framework determines will be left out of the narrative are condemned to at least temporary oblivion. Having explored the relationship between forgetting and memory, the chapter then turns to the relationship between memory and commemoration, and indeed between oblivion and commemoration, since many academics suggest that commemorations are, in fact, about forgetting. Finally, the relationship between memory, truth (and the truth commissions which reveal this truth), and reconciliation is examined. In these final sections, it is important to keep in mind that these topics are closely connected not only to memory, but also to frameworks, narratives, and oblivion, and that the relationship between all these different issues is not one of uni-directional causality. Rather, while frameworks certainly help to determine the narrative of the past, and so determine what is remembered, what is truth, and what is commemorated, truth commission reports and monuments, for example, can also work to shift historical narratives and their corresponding frameworks.

Frameworks and Memory

William Roseberry's discussion of (un)common discursive frameworks is a central element of the theoretical framework which shapes this dissertation. Roseberry bases his argument on Antonio Gramsci, who understands hegemony as struggle, and specifically as the

struggle between elites and subalterns in the political process. Hegemony, Roseberry points out, does not describe subalterns' consent to their position in society, for they do not accept their subordination. Rather, they resist it, and so hegemony refers to the process in which the terms of the relationship between subalterns and elites are negotiated. Hegemony, therefore, relates to "the ways in which the words, images, symbols, forms, organizations, institutions, and movements used by subordinate populations to talk about, understand, confront, accommodate themselves to, or resist their domination are shaped by the process of domination itself."⁶ When the dominant group has been able to establish the ways in which other groups in society demonstrate their acceptance or rejection of their domination or of certain issues or norms, Roseberry suggests that a "common discursive framework" has been established.⁷ The hegemonic process, thus, does not create consent or a belief system that elites and subalterns both embrace; rather, it works to create "a common material and meaningful framework for living through, talking about, and acting upon social orders characterized by domination." This framework is partly discursive; it describes a "common language or way of talking about social relationships," a common language which "sets out the central terms around which and in terms of which contestation and struggle can occur."⁸ Subalterns, as a result, cannot simply use any vocabulary or type of protest to oppose their subordination; rather, they must use the "languages of domination in order to be registered or heard."⁹

Roseberry argues that states are most interested in the creation of a common discursive framework, but that the creation of such a common way of expressing both acceptance and opposition is rare. This is partly due to the fact that, though the state talks incessantly, it is speaking to such a range of audiences with different histories and outlooks that each understands the state's words differently. This lack of common understanding is exacerbated when audiences relay the state's message to other audiences, altering the "words, tones, inflections, and meanings" in the process.¹⁰ Because of this, Roseberry proposes that, rather than view the

⁶ William Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 360-1.

⁷ Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," 363-4.

⁸ Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," 360-1.

⁹ William Roseberry, "Hegemony, Power, and Languages of Contention," in *The Politics of Difference: Ethnic Premises in a World of Power*, ed. Edwin N. Wilmsen and Patrick McAllister (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 81-2.

¹⁰ Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," 365.

creation of a common discursive framework as something that the state has achieved, it is best to see it as something the state *hopes* to achieve. He, furthermore, supports a focus on moments of rupture, when the discursive framework breaks down—"where national holidays are disregarded and locally significant days or places...are marked and revered...where historical markers or monuments...provoke profoundly different meanings and memories for different groups within a social field"—as the best way to fully explore domination and the hegemonic process.¹¹ At these moments, the hegemonic process is laid bare and the struggle and contestation that are key to the process can best be observed.

Jenny Edkins offers a related view of discourse, elites, and subalterns, at least in relation to trauma. She argues that abuse, when it is perpetrated by the state, is unspeakable. To label it unspeakable, she continues, "is not only an excuse to avoid the need to listen to what is being said. It also reflects the view of survivors that what they have been through cannot be communicated." This is because, though survivors of the state's abuse have a very real need to speak, the "only words they have are the words of the very political community that is the source of their suffering. This is the language of the powerful, the words of the status quo, the words that delimit and define acceptable ways of being human within that community." Yet after state-sponsored trauma, and for survivors of abuse, the "social order" has been destroyed. After trauma, when the social order, which includes language, has crumbled, "what we *can* say no longer makes sense; what we *want* to say, we can't. There are no words for it."¹²

Certainly the idea of trauma as marking a time when the (former) social order falls apart means that trauma is one of Roseberry's broadly defined moments of rupture; it is a moment when the hegemonic process is most easily seen. Trauma, when survivors are left without words to explain what happened, can be seen as a time when the state's dominant discourse is rejected and survivors struggle to find a way to relate their experiences. Instead of speaking, survivors give testimony in other ways,¹³ and indeed, since trauma is "outside the realm of language," "to bring it back to within that realm by speaking of it, by setting it within the linear narrative form,

¹¹ Roseberry, "Hegemony, Power, and Languages of Contention," 82-3.

¹² Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 7-8. Veena Das adds that "If the process of naming the violence presents a challenge, it is because such naming has large political stakes, and not only because language falters in the face of violence"; Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 205.

¹³ Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 127.

is to destroy its truth."¹⁴ When testimony, which Edkins argues is one form of resistance, is spoken, when trauma is put into words, it is converted into a form which can more easily be "appropriated and co-opted." Those with testimony to give, and especially "marginal or isolated" groups, "lose control" over their own experiences and how those experiences are more generally understood. Once put into words, testimony, she argues, is more easily appropriated into "state-building or money-making projects."¹⁵ Edkins' focus is not on hegemony and resistance, though, as with this mention of state-building, she does certainly recognize that remembering, and especially remembering trauma, is political and closely tied to power. Her description of survivors as inhabiting a world without words, however, does point to a broader understanding of "discursive" frameworks and the state's struggle to dictate how subalterns will contest their domination. In this view, words themselves, and even orality, are the state's framework, while silence and non-words are subalterns' framework and how they communicate. When survivors do decide to speak, they are agreeing to use the language of domination (i.e., orality) to be heard; in this moment, the state's framework dominates once again. When survivors decide to speak, a common discursive framework (that revolves around orality itself) is created.

Not everyone shares Edkins' view on testimony and her belief that speaking destroys the truth of testimony and allows it to be appropriated. For example, in his work on massacres in Guatemala's Ixcán, Ricardo Falla states, "testimony is good news." Testimony "states an existentially positive reality for [the witness]: that he is alive. ...The more terrible the account of what he witnessed, the more awesome the reality that he announces: I am alive."¹⁶ The Catholic Church's Proyecto Interdiocesano de Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (Remhi Project, Interdiocesan Project for the Recuperation of Historical Memory) makes a similar point. Remhi Project staff wrote that the Project's final report, *Nunca Más*, or *Never Again*, is more than a denunciation of human rights violations; it is, instead *un anuncio*, an announcement of "the resurrection of the martyred people."¹⁷ In this view, far from having been weakened when said out loud, spoken testimony is strong.

¹⁴ Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 214.

¹⁵ Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 177-8 and 190.

¹⁶ Ricardo Falla, *Massacres in the Jungle: Ixcán, Guatemala, 1975-1982*, trans. Julia Howland (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), 2.

¹⁷ Proyecto Interdiocesano de Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica, *Guatemala: Nunca Más*, Volume 1: *Impactos de la Violencia*, (Guatemala City: Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala, 1998), xiv.

Michel Foucault's writing on discourse, which accepts putting into words as a necessary given, and the way discourse is tied to and interacts with regimes of truth, adds depth to discussions about discourse. Foucault spends a great deal of time talking about discourse, which he defines as "the totality of all effective statements (whether spoken or written)."¹⁸ For Foucault, an analysis of discourse is centered on exploring the statements that are made and their possible connection with other statements, as well as determining what statements are excluded. Yet one should not "seek below what is manifest, the half silent murmur of another discourse."¹⁹ Thus the task of the archaeologist, of one who is concerned with discourse, is

not to give voice to the silence that surrounds [statements], nor to rediscover all that, in them and beside them, had remained silent or had been reduced to silence. Nor is it to study the obstacles that have prevented a particular discovery, held back a particular formulation, repressed a particular form of enunciation, a particular unconscious meaning, or a particular rationality in the course of development; but to define a limited system of presences.²⁰

Thus, when describing a statement, one should make every effort to find out the importance of the statement and the place it holds in society; one should not seek out what is unsaid or hidden.

Regimes of truth are closely related to discourse, and function much like Roseberry's discursive frameworks. Foucault describes regimes of truth as the "types of discourse which [a society] accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements." Each society possesses its own regime of truth, where truth is perpetually being consumed and debated, among other things, and is forever being called up for economic or political motivations (or for "state-building or money-making projects," as Edkins said about testimony). Not only is truth used for diverse motives, but it is also "produced and transmitted under the control...of a few great political and economic apparatuses," including the university, the military, and the media.²¹ In his discussion of Foucault, Michael Hutton brings these two threads together when he declares that, in Foucault's estimation, discourse creates the rules about what "is appropriate to the quest for truth."²²

¹⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Routledge, 2002), 29.

¹⁹ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 30-1.

²⁰ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 134.

²¹ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1980), 131-2.

²² Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), 112-3.

Discursive frameworks and (discursive) regimes of truth function very much like Steve Stern's memory frameworks and emblematic memory and Maurice Halbwachs' social frameworks. Stern uses the idea of a memory box in his study of post-Pinochet Chile to explain what he means by a memory framework. In *The Memory Box of Pinochet's Chile*, Stern describes memory boxes as being built by a community and foundational to it. The contents of a particular community's box include "several competing scripted albums, each of them works in progress that seek to define and give shape to a crucial turning point [i.e. a moment of rupture] in life." Together with these albums, the box contains " 'lore' and loose memories, that is, the stray photos and mini-albums that seem important to remember but do not necessarily fit easily in the larger scripts." The contents of the box, however, are not unchanging, as people add memories and argue about others.²³ Memory frameworks act as anchors, as moorings. People use them to organize and understand their own experiences, and to organize the albums in the memory box. Without anchors, individual experiences "would otherwise float or circulate more loosely...disconnected from the collective experience." The frameworks people use to locate their own knowledge and memories seem appropriate and valid because they are reinforced in the media, at demonstrations, in "books or truth reports," in music, or in commemorative events and public speeches.²⁴

Closely tied to Stern's memory frameworks is emblematic memory. Prefacing his explanation of emblematic memory by saying, "Memory is the meaning we attach to experience, not simply recall of the events and emotions of that experience," Stern goes on to write that emblematic memory does not refer to the content of memory or to a "concrete or substantive 'thing,' " but rather to the framework itself. When the vast range of memories are being sifted through, emblematic memory acts to select which memories will be included in the collective memory, and what significance these memories will have.²⁵ He describes how emblematic memory works, and how loose memories are either incorporated or not, as follows:

Emblematic memory functions like a moderately interactive show taking place under a big open-air tent. The performance spectacle goes on incorporating and imparting meaning to the varied specific remembrances people bring into the tent, articulating them into a wider meaning. This wider meaning defines which kinds of otherwise loose memories matter and are welcome to move forward and in effect join the show and,

²³ Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), xxviii.

²⁴ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 68.

²⁵ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 105-6.

conversely, which kinds of memories are best forgotten or pushed back toward the fringes. At the same time, emblematic memory imparts meaning to—encourages personal identification with—select events or lore drawn from media and public domain happenings.²⁶

Lest the reader imagine that emblematic memory is merely the self-interested creation of a particular group or individual in a given society, Stern is quick to point out that, for a memory to be emblematic, it must at least claim to reflect society's collective experience and truth. As well, these claims must find an echo in people's beliefs.²⁷ Though an invention, this memory scaffolding, which allows for the construction of a society's collective memory, cannot simply be erected and shaped on a whim but must speak to and reflect lived experiences and events. These lived experiences and events most often are instances of societal rupture or trauma (as in Roseberry and Edkins), moments that prove to be turning points in history and are understood as foundational.²⁸ It is at these moments of transition that emblematic memory emerges to give meaning to the trauma or break in history. Emblematic memory, like regimes of truth and discursive frameworks, is not permanent. Dominant memory frameworks can change over time and a "dissident" emblematic memory can become more mainstream and socially important. However, this shift in the dominant memory framework, Stern argues, can only happen when these dissident emblematic memories become more widely circulated, for example in the media.²⁹ And as the emblematic memory or memory framework shifts, memories and the meanings attached to them shift and once-dominant memories become dissident, like the frameworks which dictate that they are important. The frameworks, therefore, sort memories into important and unimportant, into accepted and rejected, into remembered and forgotten. They are a blueprint for social memory, for society's understanding of its history. They dictate which events, individuals, and places will be included in the narrative of the past, how these will be portrayed, as well as the emotions these will evoke. They also, however, dictate which figures and events are silenced, which are pushed to the background and subordinated to the dominant group's narrative of the past. The "making of memory," as Stern points out, is also the "making of silence." Emblematic memory and memory frameworks determine which memories get

²⁶ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 106.

²⁷ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 113.

²⁸ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 119-20.

²⁹ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 116.

"pushed to the bottom of the memory box," where the "floor opens and they fall away—into the tomb of oblivion."³⁰

Foucault spends some time discussing these dissident or marginal memories, memories that have been "forgotten." He labels them counter-memory. To explain what counter-memory is, the work of the genealogist must be explained. A genealogist's work is to (re)discover the forgotten and seemingly unimportant. As Michael Mahon describes it, Foucault's genealogists work to "dredge up forgotten documents, minor statements, apparently insignificant details in order to recreate the forgotten historical and practical conditions of our present existence."³¹ They seek out "local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges"; they preserve what Foucault terms "subjugated knowledges."³² It is this process of dredging up subjugated knowledges that have been "buried and disguised" or "disqualified as inadequate" that creates a counter-memory that "recover[s] what has been forgotten, [restores] what has been lost."³³ Counter-memory, therefore, contests the "official version" of history that dominates in a given society; it rejects the naturalness or inevitability of a (common) discursive or memory framework, regime of truth, or emblematic memory that insists that some (often awkward or uncomfortable) memories have no place. Counter-memory "introduces discontinuity into our very being."³⁴ Counter-memories are, as a result, infinitely valuable and point to the impermanence of the status quo.

Much of Stern and others' work draws on that of Maurice Halbwachs, a French philosopher and sociologist whose writings have become influential since their rediscovery in the 1980s. Halbwachs argues that individuals remember as members of a social group and can only remember as members of that group. Individuals remember using the "social frameworks" that exist in that group. These social frameworks act much like the emblematic memory that Stern

³⁰ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 149-50.

³¹ Michael Mahon, *Foucault's Nietzschean Genealogy: Truth, Power and the Subject* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 9.

³² Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 81-4. Subjugated knowledges stand in contrast to official knowledges, which serve to normalize and make people conform so that they think and act in "correct" and "functional" ways; Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace, *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and the Subject* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 17.

³³ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 81-2; Carroll quoted in Mahon, *Foucault's Nietzschean Genealogy*, 180. This is similar what he calls "effective history"—history that "deprives the self of the reassuring stability of life and nature"; Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 154 and 170.

³⁴ Foucault, *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*, 154.

explores in Chile (both of which function in a similar way to Roseberry's discursive frameworks and Foucault's regime of truth) and are recreated through repetition. Halbwachs suggests that if individuals call a particular memory to mind often enough, if that memory is repeated with great enough frequency, the specifics of that memory, in addition to being revised, become less distinct and the memory is transformed into an ideal or stereotypical memory. Such stereotypical memories merge over time into an equally stereotypical collective memory, defined by Patrick Hutton in his discussion of Halbwachs as "an elaborate network of social mores, values, and ideals that mark out the dimensions of our imaginations according to the attitudes of the social groups to which we relate."³⁵ This collective memory provides the social frameworks, or conceptual schemes, within which individual memories can be recalled; more than this, it is only within these frameworks that individual memories can be recalled.³⁶ Yet the individual is not aware of the existence of these frameworks. In the words of Paul Ricoeur, "the social framework ceases to be simply an objective notion and becomes a dimension inherent in the work of recollection."³⁷

In Halbwachs' view, it is impossible for memory to exist outside of the framework of a particular group. In this way, as David Gross writes, the individual "seems at times to be little more than a conduit through which group's memories are made manifest."³⁸ Halbwachs recognizes that individuals belong to different groups at different moments in their lives and argues that each of these groups' memories is determined by different frameworks. As one's group membership changes, so do one's memories and the frameworks within which one understands the past, present, and future.³⁹ As a result, if an individual claims to have "forgotten" some period of her life, it is simply because she is no longer surrounded by those with whom she had contact at that time, for to remember one's past, one must appeal to others' memories or to place oneself within the group once again.

Halbwachs' discussion of death and remembering the dead illustrates some of these points. Should an individual seek to keep the memory of dead relatives alive, that person will

³⁵ Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, 78

³⁶ Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, 7.

³⁷ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 122.

³⁸ David Gross, *Lost Time: On Remembering and Forgetting in Late Modern Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 81-2.

³⁹ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper and Row Books, 1980), 31.

"soon experience universal indifference" because the group whose support he needs to remember the dead no longer exists and contemporary society has other memories and concerns that dominate. A person, he declares, "who alone remembers what others do not resembles someone who sees what others do not see." The dead, therefore, are not forgotten because of the simple passage of time; rather, the group the dead belonged to, a group that "needed to name them," no longer exists, so their names disappear. Those figures of the past who are remembered are remembered because their "memory has become the object of a cult by men who remain at least fictitiously in contact with them." The rest, like the individual's dead relatives, "become part of an anonymous mass."⁴⁰

Halbwachs, thus, argues that a society cannot simply forget its past. If a person or event appears to have been forgotten, it is merely a result of the disappearance of the group and the social frameworks that previously dictated it be remembered. When a group disappears, so too does its memory. As Stern noted with emblematic memory, social frameworks change over time, often because the dominant group in society, the group that determines the "reigning conceptions and mentality" during a particular era, "fade[s] away" to make way for a new group with different social frameworks. Therefore, the ability of a particular version of collective memory to survive depends on the continued existence, as well as the continued social power, of the group that holds that particular memory.⁴¹ Those in power can determine, to a large extent, how the rest of society remembers the past, and so how the present and the future are experienced and understood.

Halbwachs' discussion of shifts in the dominant social framework is enriched by incorporating Roseberry's, and so Gramsci's, thoughts on resistance and hegemony. Halbwachs writes that those groups that are able to determine social frameworks that construct the scaffolding that shapes a group's memory "fade away in time, making room for others."⁴² He describes this as a passive action. Roseberry, on the other hand, highlights the struggle inherent in the process of trying to determine not specifically what people remember, but the related issue of how they talk about social concerns. Rather than quietly disappearing or losing social or political power, elites do all they can to remain in power in the face of subalterns' efforts to

⁴⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 73-4.

⁴¹ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 65; Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, 7.

⁴² Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 65.

improve their situation in the social order, or even to upend it. That they might use the language of domination does not mean that they do not contest that domination. It is useful to take this into consideration when reading Halbwachs. Halbwachs does acknowledge that social power is important in the continued existence of a group and its frameworks, but the process of "fading away" that he talks about is more usefully seen as involving potentially high levels of resistance and contestation.

Returning to Halbwachs, he adds that a society can only thrive if there is great "unity of outlooks." Bringing Stern's explanation of what happens to loose memories to mind, Halbwachs continues that individual memories that diverge too much from the collective memory, memories that do not fit within the social frameworks that dictate what a group remembers, will be erased. The homogenization of the past that Halbwachs describes reduces the amount of information included in the memory of the past significantly. As a result, only a few individuals and events are remembered. Those historical figures and happenings that are not believed to be important enough, or to which not enough people can relate, are condemned to be forgotten.⁴³ The simplification of the past and the culling of diverse memories occur when people attempt to "reconstruct [the past] through an effort of reasoning." In this process, the past is altered to become more unitary and coherent, as shaped by the needs of the group in power at the time.⁴⁴ Social frameworks, then, "reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society."⁴⁵ The narrative and understanding of the past are thus shaped by the needs of the present.⁴⁶

David Gross makes a similar point in *Lost Time: On Remembering and Forgetting in Late Modern Culture*. He muses on the rising and fading fortunes of remembering and forgetting, and on why it is that some promote one while others favor the other. He argues that society and social institutions, recognizing that memory "can be very effective social cement," make decisions about what is worthy of remembrance and what is not. Thus, the preservation of certain

⁴³ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 43; Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, 79.

⁴⁴ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 182-3.

⁴⁵ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 40.

⁴⁶ The connection between the past and present is also evident in Halbwachs' discussion of historical memory, those memories which a person did not experience personally, but which individuals know about indirectly through reading or through commemorative or celebratory events. This "borrowed memory" has a great influence on social thought and institutions, but it is also subject to change for, as Halbwachs wrote, "history indeed resembles a crowded cemetery, where room must constantly be made for new tombstones." (Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 51-2.)

memories is "purposeful, intentional, and institutionally supported," and directed toward social cohesion.⁴⁷ While this has been the case for some centuries, he declares that society's tools for determining which memories are remembered have evolved. It used to be that collective memory was determined using brute force. In time, however, as it became clear that, except at moments of deep crisis, the infliction of pain was not necessary to the exercise of power over memory, this crude method was exchanged for more subtle means, such as schooling and commemoration. During periods of instability or rapid change, Gross points out, those in power might revert to the use of force to impose a particular view of the past on the population, which ruling groups deem essential to restore stability and strengthen the bonds that hold society together. But in non-exceptional times, all that is necessary to determine collective memory is to control the frameworks that people use to understand the past, and so also the present and the future.⁴⁸

The interconnected ideas Roseberry, Stern, Foucault, Halbwachs, and Gross explore point to the existence of things—frameworks—that determine how and what societies remember (and forget) and how we talk about those things.⁴⁹ They also underscore that these frameworks change as the societies they belong to change, as power struggles play out, as elite groups change, and as, perhaps, subalterns become the elite. A discursive/memory/social/truth framework helps to dictate what is excluded, pushed to the margins, and at least temporarily forgotten. This is the overarching, more official, and rather homogenized version of history that is not contested, but which shapes how people make demands on the state and how they struggle against it. It helps determine, in an incessant process of negotiation and contestation, the language and images that will be accepted in the debate around the meaning of the past, present, and future.

Narratives and memory

Frameworks, then, help to determine what is included and remembered in a society's collective memory, founding myth, and/or narrative of the past. In *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Paul Ricoeur discusses memory and narrative in greater depth. He argues that in deciding how to tell a story, "one can always recount differently, by eliminating, by shifting the emphasis, by recasting the protagonists of the action in a different light along with the outlines of the action."

⁴⁷ Gross, *Lost Time*, 25.

⁴⁸ Gross, *Lost Time*, 78-80 and 116-7.

⁴⁹ Edkins, of course, rewinds the issue to explore frameworks related not to what will be put into words, but frameworks that determine whether to speak at all.

Narratives, therefore, are selective, and forgetting is an active part of the process of telling and re-telling. Speaking of forgetting, he warns against official history, history that is "authorized, imposed, celebrated, commemorated." This type of history involves a "devious" type of forgetting, whereby individuals are denied the power to tell their own stories; however, he concludes that they are, to some extent, accomplices in their own disempowerment.⁵⁰

Michel-Rolph Trouillot's discussion of memory in Haiti also includes an exploration of narrative and silencing. Narrative, he suggests, is one of the ways in which people participate in history, the other being as actors. History is not merely "what happened," but also "what is said to have happened."⁵¹ Through the "subjective capacity" of history, people become involved in both the process of history and in the creation of narratives about that process. Trouillot calls these the "two sides of historicity." Yet while the contents of the narratives are important, the process through which a narrative is created is more significant, for "only a focus on that process can uncover the ways in which the two sides of historicity intertwine in a particular context." Additionally, "only in overlap can we discover the differential exercises of power that make some narratives possible and silence others,"⁵² narratives that are condemned to oblivion, much as other authors' dissident memories were.

According to Trouillot, the "bundles of silences"⁵³ that exist in historical narratives are created at four distinct moments: at the moment of fact creation, at the moment of fact assembly, at the moment of fact retrieval, and at the moment of retrospective significance. The first two moments he describes as the making of sources and the making of archives. These processes are "neither natural nor neutral." Rather, including or excluding information are both active, complementary processes; the absence or presence of particular information is created, and the presence of some information requires the absence of other information. Thus, speaking of Haiti, Trouillot argues that every time the palace of Sans Souci is purposefully and actively included in history, Sans Souci the man is purposefully and actively excluded. The absence of the man is part of the production of history.⁵⁴ At the moment of fact retrieval, at the moment when the narrative is made, some facts are recalled more often and given more weight than others. In his

⁵⁰ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 448.

⁵¹ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 2-3.

⁵² Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 23-5.

⁵³ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 27.

⁵⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 48-9.

re-discovery of Sans Souci the man, therefore, Trouillot did not have to find new facts; he only had to create a new narrative of the facts that already existed.⁵⁵ In this view, Sans Souci the man bears a striking resemblance to Foucault's counter-memory, and Trouillot's work to that of a genealogist.

The final moment of historical production, which Trouillot labels the moment of retrospective significance, is perhaps the most important for it is only in this final moment when "the combined silences accrued through the first three steps of the process of historical production intermesh and solidify." This does not have to occur after some time has passed and all the actors have died; Trouillot argues, "Retrospective significance can be created by the actors themselves, as a past within their past, or as a future within their present." In the Haitian case, Henri Christophe killed Sans Souci the man first in flesh and blood, and then by naming his palace after him. This naming silenced Sans Souci the man from Christophe's past and from his future, but did not eliminate him from the sources. Evidence of the man remained, waiting for an intrepid historian like Trouillot to unearth it. Trouillot continues this discussion by suggesting that Christophe's silencing may have been too successful; soon, people forgot Sans Souci the man, who represented Christophe's victory over all his enemies, and made the connection between Christophe's castle and Potsdam. This would have been opposite to Christophe's intentions; Christophe was, according to Trouillot, nothing if not vain and proud.⁵⁶ Trouillot concludes his discussion of the silencing of Sans Souci the man by arguing that later Haitian historians continued the process because Sans Souci represented a moment in history they would like to overlook—"fratricide," where blacks fought blacks and not the French. The lack of unity of purpose among black Haitians is "the only shameful page in the history of the sole successful slave revolution in the annals of humankind." In the years since, Haitian historians have sought to forget this disunity in the name of nation-building by silencing Sans Souci and the battles he fought.⁵⁷ This silencing, Trouillot states, is more effective than "the absence or failure of memory, whether faked or genuine."⁵⁸

Incorporating the works of Roseberry, Stern, and others with Trouillot's discussion of historical production and narrative making, it is clear narratives are produced by frameworks like

⁵⁵ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 53-8.

⁵⁶ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 59-61.

⁵⁷ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 66.

⁵⁸ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 60.

Roseberry's and Stern's that limit what can be and is remembered; narratives, however, as in the moment of retrospective significance, also help to reproduce those frameworks and their limits. These narratives recall mnemohistory. Jan Assmann describes his exploration of the grand narrative of Western monotheism, and the place of an idolatrous Egypt in that narrative, in this way. Egypt represents everything that Israel is not and that Israel has moved beyond, a past that has been pushed aside and disavowed. However, Egypt cannot simply be forgotten; it must be remembered so that Christians know that idolatry is in their past and that they must work to prevent it from returning. To remember Egypt, then, is to remember conversion.⁵⁹ Assmann's investigation is mnemohistory; it is not concerned with the past as it happened, but with how it is remembered (which certainly also includes how it is talked about and written down). Mnemohistory focuses on "those aspects of significance and relevance which are the product of memory—recourse to the past—and which appear only in the light of later readings."⁶⁰ Mnemohistorians, therefore, study the past with the present in mind; they aim to discover the meaning and significance that a specific present attributes to the past. They explore memories and how they have been reconstructed and mediated by the needs of the present.⁶¹ This dissertation, therefore, is in some ways and in some moments a mnemohistory, one focused not on the contents of history, but on the way it is recalled and used in the present. The focus, however, is less on how exactly memories have been reconstructed and more on the frameworks in place which determine, in large part, which memories will be reconstructed, and how those memories will be talked about.

Oblivion and Memory

But what is memory? And what is forgetting? As Jay Winter wrote, "Just as we use words like love and hate without ever knowing their full or shared significance, so are we bound to go on using the term 'memory,' the historical signature of our generation." "The only fixed point," he concludes, "is the near ubiquity of the term."⁶² Some scholars, however, have more clear ideas about what it is, though their ideas cover a wide range. Assmann, for example,

⁵⁹ Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 7-8.

⁶⁰ Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian*, 8-9.

⁶¹ Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian*, 10.

⁶² Jay Winter, "The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the 'Memory Boom' in Contemporary Historical Studies," <http://www.ghi-dc.org/publications/ghipubs/bu/027/b27winterframe.html>.

describes memory as recourse to the past, while Manolo Vela Castañeda uses memory as a metaphor to describe the "combination of historical narratives and cultural production related to the past."⁶³ Stern, for his part, declares, "Memory is the meaning we attach to experience, not simply recall of the events and emotions of that experience." This definition and Stern's discussion of one of the memory frameworks he identified in post-Pinochet Chile help to clarify memory and forgetting, and Stern's understanding of memory will form the foundation of this investigation's use of the term. In the "memory as a closed box" framework, adherents practice "passionate indifference." There is, thus, in some sectors of Chilean society, a will to forget. This will arises from the belief that there are some memories that are so divisive that society will benefit very little if they are remembered publicly. These memories inhabit the closed box of memory, the closing of which is inspired by a range of different motivations and is not confined solely to the right, the military, or others who benefitted from Pinochet's policies. Some Chileans, therefore, "forget" to help Chile move forward and overcome its dictatorial and violent past. Forgetting or indifference, however, is often just a public façade; Stern suggests that even those who are outwardly indifferent to the past still remember privately and "visit the memory box" with trusted relatives and friends.⁶⁴ Stern concludes,

Keeping the box closed is the practical precondition for tranquility and reconciliation.... At bottom, memory as a closed box is remembrance as *olvido* ("oblivion" or "forgetting"). Far from the involuntary amnesia of someone who has suffered a bad fall, however, the forgetting is filled with memory and meaning. Based on remembrance, one defines the usefulness of forgetting. Based on remembrance, one defines what needs to be consigned to the back burner of cultural oblivion. Some loose memories or lore are useful because they remind one of the dangerousness that justifies closing the box. Other memories stir up trouble. Prudence allows them to drift to the margins of consciousness.⁶⁵

"Forgetting" the past is a conscious decision that is made with the future in mind; it is a multi-faceted and complex process that has little in common with the more everyday uses people make of the verb "to forget." "Forgetting" is best understood as choosing not to remember, as intentionally silencing the past for the sake of the present and future.

⁶³ Manolo Vela Castañeda, "Memorias de una Batalla: Guatemala," unpublished manuscript, 21.

⁶⁴ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 89-90 and 101. In this, as Diane Nelson might describe it, they are two-faced. (Diane M. Nelson, *Reckoning: The Ends of War in Guatemala* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).)

⁶⁵ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 112.

Stern, thus, situates forgetting as counter to remembering in some ways, though for this to work, the meaning of forgetting must be altered. It must be recognized that he also insisted that imagining memory to be in a battle to the death against forgetting was too "restrictive," "tend[ing] to align one set of actors with memory and another with forgetting." Instead, Stern writes, "In the approach I have taken, the social actors behind distinct frameworks are seeking to define that which is truthful and meaningful about a great collective trauma. They are necessarily selective as they give shape to memory, and they may all see themselves as struggling, at one point or another, against oblivion propagated by their antagonists"⁶⁶ Different actors are thus not always struggling against forgetting, but against other memories which are imagined as truth.

Allan Megill's discussion of remembering and forgetting is also relevant, and raises the question of whether memory is narrative. He adds to discussions of memory and forgetting—which he declares are "so closely tied up with each other that they are inseparable"—by suggesting that a better way to imagine the issue is to "speak of the acceptance or rejection of certain narratives—each of which is itself a bundle of rememberings and forgettings."⁶⁷ Tzvetan Todorov, for his part, argues that when we are called on to never forget a past, "we should realize that we are not being asked to undertake any recovery of memory... What we are being invited to undertake is the defense of a particular selection of facts that allow its protagonists to maintain their status as heroes, victims, or teachers of moral lessons, against any other selection that might give them less gratifying roles."⁶⁸

Elizabeth Jelin agrees. She suggests that the remembering/forgetting binary is false. Jelin argues that the struggle for memory and about memory, which she recognizes is political, is often imagined and described as a struggle against forgetting or against silence, a struggle to remember so as not to repeat. What the struggle is really about, however, is competing memories. Memory's battle against forgetting "hides what is in reality an opposition between different rival memories, each one of which incorporates its own forgettings." In the end, the struggle is "memory against memory,"⁶⁹ which lends weight to the idea that memory is not so different from narrative. Jelin's work with Susana G. Kaufman underscores the falseness of the remembering/forgetting dichotomy. They suggest that forgetting is the "presence of the

⁶⁶ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, xxvii.

⁶⁷ Allan Megill, *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error: A Contemporary Guide to Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 73.

⁶⁸ Todorov, *Hope and Memory*, 175.

⁶⁹ Elizabeth Jelin, "Memorias en Conflicto," *Puentes* 1, no. 1 (2000): 7-8.

absence." Forgetting is the "representation of what was once there and no longer is, the representation of something that has been erased, silenced or denied." When a society forgets, it "implies a societal cleft, a rupture between individual memory and public and/or collective practices." This forgetting suggests that the transmission of memory from one generation to the next has failed.⁷⁰

Commemoration and Memory

Yet no matter if forgetting is the best way to understand something that is contrary to remembering, it is not something that is easily accomplished. Returning to Stern, he points out that forgetting is not as easy as simply not remembering, for many things exist which work against forgetting and in favor of remembering. This includes the existence of "memory knots," "sites where the social body screams." Memory knots can be "sites of humanity, sites in time, and sites of physical matter or geography." In Chile, the first refers to journalists, members of both the government and anti-government groups, including those in religious and human rights organizations and those groups dedicated to finding the disappeared, but also those "who feel drawn to participate in a street commemoration or protest." Sites in time are those events or dates where the "symbolic power to 'convene' or project memory" is located. Events and their yearly anniversaries "*demand*ed human efforts of interpretation, control, and projection" and made more people pay attention to remembrance. The third variety of memory knot, "sites of physical matter or geography," includes the bodies of the disappeared, detention centers, museums, books, monuments, or sites of massacres. These sites consist of places or objects that can "evince a power of almost sacred connection to the past, and consequently stir up and project polemics about memory and amnesia." The physical and tangible memory knots are perhaps the most powerful and, in Stern's mind, "exert a certain cultural magic." Their magical qualities, and their power, originate in the fact that they are the direct result and product of great historical trauma.⁷¹

Taken as a group, these knots "stir up, collect, and concentrate memories, thereby 'projecting' memory and polemics about memory into public space or imagination." Memory knots demand that something be remembered. By so doing, they interrupt a "more unthinking

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Jelin and Susana G. Kaufman, "Layers of Memory: Twenty Years after in Argentina," in *Commemorating War: The Politics of Memory*, eds. Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Ropers (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 106.

⁷¹ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 120-3

and habitual life" and insist that people make connections between their own memories and experiences and collective memory.⁷² Memory knots insist that society keep the "troublesome past within the present" and not let it fade into oblivion.⁷³ Stern summarizes the way memory knots determine emblematic memory as follows:

the human relations and activities organized either to create or to respond to memory knots enable us to trace the making and unmaking of emblematic memories—the contentious processes that project some ways of organizing memory forcefully into the public cultural domain, as essential "truths" through which people build bridges between personal knowledge or experience and the imagined national community of experience, while pushing other lore and narratives to the margins.⁷⁴

Thus, reminiscent of Roseberry's discussion about how moments of rupture reveal how the hegemonic process works, and Edkins' work on trauma, memory knots are sites of struggle between memories and provide a point of entry into understanding emblematic memory and how it is formed.

Stern's talk of memory knots being sites recalls Pierre Nora's discussion, in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, of the places where the past is brought to mind. Nora calls these places *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory.⁷⁵ He writes that, "as traditional memory has vanished, we have felt called upon to accumulate fragments, reports, documents, images, and speeches—any tangible sign of what was—as if this expanding dossier might some day be subpoenaed as evidence in who knows what tribunal of history."⁷⁶ *Lieux de mémoire*, which are meant to "to stop time, to inhibit forgetting, to fix a state of things, to immortalize death, and to materialize the immaterial,"⁷⁷ only exist because of the "acceleration of history." The French, in Nora's work, are pushed to create these "bastions of memory" because they feel that history threatens memory, that history and its constant acceleration promote memory's disappearance; "if history did not besiege memory," he writes, "deforming and transforming it, penetrating and petrifying it, there would be no *lieux de mémoire*."⁷⁸ In his mind, therefore, history and memory are opposites, and so what memory is, is defined by what it is not. They do not work toward the

⁷² Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 120-1.

⁷³ Steve J. Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973-1988* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 244.

⁷⁴ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 124.

⁷⁵ Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn, "Introduction," *Representations* 26 (1989), 3.

⁷⁶ Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 9.

⁷⁷ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26 (1989), 12.

⁷⁸ Nora, "Between Memory and History," 19.

same ends; and indeed how could they if, though it might be over-stating Nora's point, history gobbles memory up on its endless march toward the future. Yet memory is important and serves a vital function in society. Thus, since *milieux de mémoire*, "settings in which memory is a real part of everyday experience,"⁷⁹ no longer exist (having been consumed by history), society is pushed to commemorate and celebrate important anniversaries, create archives by amassing "any tangible sign of what was," and generally construct *lieux de mémoire* because this no longer happens by itself. Memory increasingly exists only through its "exterior scaffolding." Yet, lest it be believed that Nora is only critical of *lieux de mémoire*, he believes that without them and without their "commemorative vigilance," history would distort, transform, or destroy memory.⁸⁰

Lieux de mémoire, therefore, are places where struggles about memory and meaning take place and where the (un)importance of the past for the present and future is determined.⁸¹ Nora's discussion of how the past is re-remembered when it is remembered together (that is, through commemoration), and how divisive memories are forgotten, is particularly significant.⁸² There is no reason to imagine that *lieux de mémoire* are free from the power struggles and social, economic, political, or other types of pressure that discursive/memory/social frameworks or regimes of truth co-exist with, and Nora underscores that one of the more "exciting" qualities of *lieux de mémoire* is their "capacity for change, their ability to resurrect old meanings and generate new ones along with new and unforeseen connections."⁸³ But these new and old meanings are not simply new and old; rather, like *lieux de mémoire* themselves, they reflect the dominant concerns and discourses of the time, discourses which change with the passage of time and the rise and fall of different groups in power.⁸⁴ Indeed, the appeal of a monument, for example, is that its meaning, like *lieux de mémoire* more generally, can be endlessly recycled.⁸⁵ Given the opposition between *lieux de mémoire* and *milieux de mémoire* (and history and memory), Nora's comments about the un-fixedness of the meaning of *lieux de mémoire*, and his celebration of memory, it is possible to conclude that, counter to other authors' arguments, it is less (or perhaps not at all) possible to manipulate memory to serve the needs of the present.

⁷⁹ Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 1-2.

⁸⁰ Nora, "Between Memory and History," 12-3; James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust, Memorials, and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 5.

⁸¹ Zemon Davis and Starn, "Introduction," 3.

⁸² Nora, "Between Memory and History"; see also Zemon Davis and Starn, "Introduction."

⁸³ Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 15.

⁸⁴ Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory*, 10.

⁸⁵ Nora, "Between Memory and History," 19.

Nora's opposition between history and memory, and Eelco Runia's views on it, are interesting here, perhaps especially because the relationship between history and memory forms a central part of the post-Peace discourse in El Salvador and even more so in Guatemala, and also because the question of what memory is has not yet been answered adequately (and nor will it be in this discussion). Runia's argument also provides a perhaps unexpected introduction to the topic of remembering together, which will be addressed below. Runia rejects Nora's explanation that history and memory are opposed to each other. He locates the core of the problem in the fact that memory is "an extremely complex phenomenon and that anybody can find anything in it to suit his or her taste or purpose." As a result, defining the opposite of history as memory is as useful as describing history as the "antithesis" of "consciousness" or "love." Instead, he argues that in describing ways to address the past, the more appropriate opposite of history is not memory, but commemoration.⁸⁶ Nora, it seems, has a similar view on the issue of commemoration and history, as seen in his description of history as distorting memory, and his belief that *lieux de mémoire* help to protect memory from this onslaught.

All this, however, begs the question of whether commemorating, building monuments, and creating other *lieux de mémoire* actually contribute to memory being less and less experienced in day-to-day life, to it being increasingly experienced only through the scaffolding Nora describes, leading to further memory loss.⁸⁷ That Nora also argues that commemoration is little more than "participation without participation" and separates the on-lookers and the event being commemorated, leading to indifference,⁸⁸ also makes one wonder if commemoration and *lieux de mémoire* are beneficial at all.

Other authors have addressed this and similar questions about commemoration. Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, for example, echo Nora's sentiments and suggest that, "once we assign monumental form to a memory, we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember."⁸⁹ For Peter Carrier,

Although the transmission of history as an aesthetic medium for mass consumption does fulfill the object of commemoration by 'calling to mind,' it also categorizes and fixes the past in a given form that ritually creates and fulfills an appetite for uncritical information,

⁸⁶ Eelco Runia, "Burying the Dead, Creating the Past," *History and Theory* 46, no. 3 (2007): 315-6.

⁸⁷ Nora, "Between Memory and History," 12-3; Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 5.

⁸⁸ Peter Carrier, "Historical Traces of the Present: The Uses of Commemoration," *Historical Reflections* 22 (1996), 439.

⁸⁹ Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998), 119.

and thereby renders ineffective the pertinence of the past in the present. It petrifies the past both literally and metaphorically by imposing monolithic form which, ritualized and banalized, is historically redundant and effectively invisible.⁹⁰

Carrier, like Nora, sees commemoration as paradoxical; it is meant to keep the past present, but instead creates greater distance. James E. Young, one of the leading commentators on Holocaust memorials and monuments, goes so far as to suggest that "the initial impulse to memorialize events such as the Holocaust may actually spring from an opposite and equal desire to forget them."⁹¹ Edkins, for her part, argues that commemoration can facilitate forgetting as those in power "can use accounts of heroism and sacrifice that tell a story of the founding of a state, a narrative of glorious origin."⁹² For these authors, there is certainly some validity to Runia's description of commemoration as being counter to history.

Trouillot also weighs in on the issue, though in a more roundabout way. Like Nora, he discusses the malleability of commemoration and argues that diverse interpretations of the events commemorations call to mind are possible because they are so decontextualized. Indeed, he suggests that the "richer the ritual, the easier it is for subsequent performers to change parts of the script or to impose new interpretations."⁹³ Commemorations "sanitize" and "mythicize" history, they "adorn the past with certainty," a false certainty that revolves around the fact that a particular event is commemorated regularly, without fail. The yearly celebrations mask the fact that a given event was not inevitable; only its celebration is. Additionally, these celebrations give shape to an otherwise amorphous history and define the meaning of a particular event.⁹⁴ In a description that bears a striking resemblance to how discursive/social/memory frameworks operate, Trouillot declares that commemoration is selective. For all those events or people that are remembered through commemoration, no matter how sterile these memories are, other events and people are not remembered. They are silenced, pushed aside, and forgotten.⁹⁵

Others are far more supportive of the building of monuments and the commemorating of key dates. Alexandra Barahona de Brito, Carmen González-Enríquez, and Paloma Aguilar argue that commemoration is an "established foci of resistance to the logic of amnesty and forgetting."

⁹⁰ Carrier, "Historical Traces of the Present," 440.

⁹¹ Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 5.

⁹² Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 54.

⁹³ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 131.

⁹⁴ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 116.

⁹⁵ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 117-8.

The authors recognize that the meaning of the commemorations and monuments is not fixed, but that the struggle over both meaning and "ownership" keeps the past alive in the present and helps to prevent forgetting.⁹⁶ Jelin and Kaufmann's study of post-dictatorial Argentina draws on the idea of commemoration being a site of struggle and expands on it. Jelin and Kaufman argue that when a death, disappearance, or detention center is commemorated, "the labors of memory became more inclusive and shared, invading every day life. It is hard work for everybody, on all sides of the controversies, for all people, of different ages and experiences. Facts are reorganized, existing perspectives and schemes of interpretation are shaken, voices of new and old generations ask questions, tell stories, create spaces for interaction, share clues about what they experienced, what they heard, what they silenced before."⁹⁷

Jelin and Kaufman's argument relates to attempts to remember and commemorate not great acts of heroism or victorious war, but repression, all of which involved great struggle on the part of civil society. Dacia Viejo-Rose also differentiates between different kinds of memorials or commemorative events. For her, the difference lies not in what is being commemorated, but in how the memorials were created. She identifies two types of memorials—official memorials and grassroots or spontaneous memorials. The two types, however, should not be viewed as polar opposites, but on a spectrum; depending on how they are used, official memorials can become grassroots memorials, and vice versa. She adds that, while memorials are physical, unchanging objects, their meaning is not; rather, such meaning is in constant flux. Over time, in an explanation that brings Nora to mind, different meanings and interpretations are added to memorials and old meanings are pushed aside. These older meanings, however, are not forgotten or erased but "intermittently wax and wane in different contexts with each use and reuse."⁹⁸ Yet, in addition to the meaning or import of a monument changing over time, so too can its significance change depending on who is seeing the monument or listening to a commemorative speech. This, Viejo-Rose argues, can promote division in a given society.⁹⁹ Viejo-Rose does not deny that memorials can be used as a means of social control or to help create a founding myth to support the claims to power of a particular group, but she never loses

⁹⁶ Alexandra Barahona de Brito, Carmen González-Enríquez, and Paloma Aguilar, "Introduction," in *The Politics of Memory: Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies*, eds. Alexandra Barahona de Brito, Carmen González-Enríquez and Paloma Aguilar (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 37.

⁹⁷ Jelin and Kaufman, "Layers of Memory," 96.

⁹⁸ Dacia Viejo-Rose, "Memorial Functions: Intent, Impact and the Right to Remember," *Memory Studies* 4, no. 4 (2011), 467.

⁹⁹ Viejo-Rose, "Memorial Functions," 472.

sight of her point that memorials and monuments *can* become sites of resistance, nor, in what would surely be a hegemonic process similar to those Roseberry describes, that official memorials and the memory they support can be supplanted by previously grassroots memorials and the understanding of the past that they embrace.

Runia also finds some positive aspects to commemoration. Commemoration, he argues, is essentially the way that a society discovers who it is; commemoration is how a society searches for its essence, for commemoration has as its most basic purpose answering the question, "who are we that that this could have happened?" Runia recognizes that this question is most often answered in an "identity-enhancing, yes, self-celebratory way," but potentially, commemoration, if done with "self-exploration" in mind, can lead to a coming to terms with some past societal trauma in which "we did things we didn't think we were capable of doing." It is, he suggests, exactly these events that we wish to remember later.¹⁰⁰ Thoughtfully commemorating past behavior we are not proud of will have the benefit of both helping us work through trauma and, he adds, will help us become the people who did not do the things we commemorate.¹⁰¹ Runia's defense of commemoration also directly confronts "platonists like Nora" and what Runia sees as their more negative view of memory sites. Runia declares that commemoration is not "an epiphenomenon of some basic fault of humanity, but the necessary concomitant of the exquisitely human faculty of externalization." To prove his point, he first discusses burying the dead as a way to achieve both closure and perpetuation. It also allows humanity to "bring much more to bear on the present than what their consciousnesses can contain." Using these ideas as a foundation, he argues that commemoration is a "complement of burial," and indeed it is essential in societies with an "excess of memory" or where there are no bodies to bury. In such societies, commemoration serves to bring the unique combination of closure and perpetuation that usually accompanies burial.¹⁰²

Truth, Reconciliation, and Memory

Remembering, as well as commemorating, are at the core of truth and other similar investigatory commissions created as countries transition from conflict to "peace." Indeed, truth commissions' investigations and reports can themselves be seen as commemorations, for they

¹⁰⁰ Runia, "Burying the Dead, Creating the Past," 316-7.

¹⁰¹ Runia, "Burying the Dead, Creating the Past," 320.

¹⁰² Runia, "Burying the Dead, Creating the Past," 324-5.

certainly serve as memorials for the dead.¹⁰³ Continuing in this vein, and from Runia's perspective, commemoration, as a "complement of burial," is necessary in societies where there are many disappeared. That truth-seeking or fact-finding commissions complement burial, however, is not the main reason why post-conflict or post-crisis societies opt to create them. They are, above all, motivated by a belief that "the truth" about human rights violations committed during a particular period was hidden or silenced, and that it must be known. For Priscilla B. Hayner, who has written extensively about truth commissions, they aim to "establish an accurate record of a country's past, clarify uncertain events, and lift the lid of silence and denial from a contentious and painful period of history,"¹⁰⁴ one characterized by the massive commission of human rights violations. Thus, these commissions work to reveal the (dis)information of the previous regime as lies told to maintain power and justify repression. Yet as Hayner points out, truth commissions do not "find the truth"; rather, they "*acknowledg[e]* it."¹⁰⁵ Commissions unsilence truths with the hope that, by recording what really happened during a dictatorship or conflict, by acknowledging the truth of that era, the now "more knowledgeable citizenry will recognize and resist any sign of return to repressive rule."¹⁰⁶ As Kimberly Theidon wrote in *Intimate Enemies*, her exploration of *Sendero Luminoso* and reconciliation in Peru, the general equation which inspires truth commissions, is "more memory = more truth = more healing = more reconciliation,"¹⁰⁷ with a key aspect of reconciliation being non-repetition. This is on full display in the title of the report of the Argentine truth commission, the first major truth commission in Latin America: *Nunca Más*.¹⁰⁸

Yet truth and similar commissions are not without their critics. Wole Soyinka focuses on the ease with which truth is thought to lead to reconciliation in the "logic of 'Truth and Reconciliation.'" This logic, he writes, "demands that the mind prepare itself for the spectacle of a 'penitent' Pol Pot, freed, morally cleansed, at liberty to go about his business in a humanely

¹⁰³ I discuss this in my MA thesis, "Truth and Forgetting in Guatemala: An Examination of *Memoria del Silencio* and *Nuna Más*" (MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2005).

¹⁰⁴ Priscilla B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 24-5.

¹⁰⁵ Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths*, 607.

¹⁰⁶ Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths*, 609.

¹⁰⁷ Kimberly Theidon, *Intimate Enemies: Violence and Reconciliation in Peru* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 269. Yet how exactly truth would prevent future violence is unclear, as Theidon acknowledged when she questioned the mathematics behind the equation.

¹⁰⁸ Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas, *Nunca Más*, 1984, http://web.archive.org/web/20031013222229/http://nuncamas.org/english/library/nevagain/nevagain_004.htm.

restored milieu!" He continues, in reference to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its "truth for amnesty" deal:

This risk-free parade of villains, calmly—and occasionally with ill-concealed relish—recounting their roles in kidnappings, tortures, murders, and mutilation, at the end of which absolution is granted without penalty or forfeit, is either a lesson in human ennoblement, or a glorification of impunity.¹⁰⁹

He argues that the "missing link" in the idea that truth will lead to reconciliation is reparations. They "serve as a cogent critique of history and thus a potent restraint on its repetition."¹¹⁰

Edkins criticizes truth commissions from a different angle. She declares, "The reduction of suffering and trauma to a question of truth silences the voices of survivors, as does the appropriation of their truth to a discursive contest in the service of power relations." She adds, "We should not seek for 'the truth' or 'the facts' since so often these are given to us as heroic narratives or written as convenient lies."¹¹¹ Her comments are supported, in some ways, by the work of Jacques Le Goff, who notes that collective memory, which is surely what truth commissions contribute to creating, "is not only a conquest, it is also an instrument and an objective of power." Indeed, he writes that collective memory is "one of the great stakes of developed and developing societies, of dominated and dominating classes, all of them struggling for power or for life, for survival and for advancement."¹¹² As a result, some argue that truth commissions are simply evidence that a new group has come to power. Truth commissions are normally formed in a time of political transition, and often in a transition from military government to something that resembles democracy. Though this most often means that the new government will be more open, commit fewer human rights violations, and more accurately reflect the wishes and needs of the majority, critics nevertheless argue that the new narrative of the past which truth commissions acknowledge is still one official version of the past. Though it might correspond more closely with what the majority experienced, this new official history, as with the official history(ies) which preceded it, seeks to determine what and how people remember and the meaning attached to past events. For critics, truth commissions, therefore, are evidence of the dominance of a different social group with its corresponding social/memory/discursive framework.

¹⁰⁹ Wole Soyinka, *The Burden of Memory, the Muse of Forgiveness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 28-9.

¹¹⁰ Soyinka, *The Burden of Memory*, 83.

¹¹¹ Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 169 and 173.

¹¹² Le Goff, *History and Memory*, 97-8.

Maria G. Cattell and Jacob J. Climo point out a different weakness of truth commissions. They argue that the process of elevating the status of the memory or narrative of the past (one which closely resembles Foucault's counter-memory) to the official memory or history imposes new silences on the past and relegates some (previously dominant) memories to counter-memories.¹¹³ The creation of new silences is, indeed, a common criticism of truth and truth-like commissions, and it is closely related to the similarities between truth commissions and memory/social/discursive frameworks and commemorations, at least in regard to the way they all operate. All of these dictate what will be remembered and what will be condemned to oblivion, thereby limiting the range of memories, narratives, or ways of talking that are understood to be "true" or valid. Yet more than simply creating silences, truth commissions are criticized for the way that they delegitimize competing memories that exist about the past and tend to even out the ups and downs of memory, eliminating its nuances and complexity.¹¹⁴ In truth commission reports, therefore, a range of experiences and testimonies are reduced to one simplified experience.

The imposition of homogeneity on a heterogeneous past is most often motivated by a desire to build national unity and encourage citizens' sense of belonging to a nation.¹¹⁵ Indeed, unity and the desire to build a new (reconciled) nation are, in addition to guaranteeing non-repetition, often explicitly stated goals of truth and truth-like commissions. They are also the most difficult goals to achieve.¹¹⁶ Indeed, Linda Bishai believes that the "unity mantra" that motivates the work of truth commissions and the push to create a grand narrative of the past are

¹¹³ Maria G. Cattell and Jacob J. Climo, "Meaning in Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives," in *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, eds. Jacob J. Climo and Maria G. Cattell (New York: Altamira Press, 2002), 32-3.

¹¹⁴ Cheryl Natzman, "Remembering and Forgetting: Creative Expression and Reconciliation in Post-Pinochet Chile," in *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, eds. Jacob J. Climo and Maria G. Cattell (New York: Altamira Press, 2002), 161; Janet Cherry, "Historical Truth: Something to Fight For," in *Looking Back, Reaching Forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa*, eds. Charles Villa-Vicencio and William Verwoerd (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2000), 143.

¹¹⁵ Priscilla B. Hayner, "In Pursuit of Justice and Reconciliation: Contributions of Truth Telling," in *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*, ed. Cynthia J. Arnson (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999), 317; Brandon Hamber and Richard A. Wilson, "Symbolic Closure Through Memory, Reparation and Revenge in post-Conflict Societies," in *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict*, eds. Ed Cairns and Micheál D. Roe (New York: Palgrave MacMillan Ltd, 2003), 145-6.

¹¹⁶ Part of this failure is because the nation which one hopes to put back together was never together in the first place. (Linda Bishai, "Forgetting Ourselves: Nietzsche, Critical History, and the Politics of Collective Memory," Paper presented at Political Studies Association-UK 50th Annual Conference, 10-13 April 2000, London, 3.)

self-defeating.¹¹⁷ Though scholars like Hayner recognize that truth and truth-like commissions, as in the case of the commission created by Idi Amin in Uganda in 1975, can be "political tools,"¹¹⁸ Brian Havel takes this criticism further. He suggests that truth commissions are "public law device[s]" which are created to "outmaneuver" the victims' and survivors' testimony. They are the new government's attempt to include the victims' narratives into a new national founding myth that will, hopefully, guarantee peace and stability.¹¹⁹ The danger of this is that these new counter-memories will likely pose a threat to the project of nation-building in the future, the same project which elevates counter-memory to the status of memory.¹²⁰ Overall, then, truth commissions and the reports they publish ignore the complexity of memory and force a range of memories into an umbrella framework of reconciliation.

One way forward for truth commissions is, as some scholars argue, to reimagine what reconciliation (among other terms) is. For Cheryl Natzman, reconciliation should be understood as drafting a history that incorporates contradictory memories of past conflict,¹²¹ and it is this idea of reconciliation that truth commissions should use. For Hayner, truth and investigatory commissions should promote a view of reconciliation based on "a generally agreed understanding of a country's history and past wrongs"; they should not be focused on finding "the truth" about the past because it does not exist. Yet, though there is never only one truth, there *are* certain facts that must be accepted as true. These form the basis of Hayner's "generally agreed understanding" of the past, and their acceptance is also the basis of reconciliation.¹²²

On (what is perhaps) the other hand, in their work about transitional justice projects in Peru, Lisa J. Laplante and Kelly Phenicie argue that consensus about the past is just what societies like Peru that are transitioning from dictatorship and conflict to (ideally) democracy and peace need. This consensus about the past, which they argue forms the basis of collective memory, involves, at its most basic, the "replace[ment of] the version of history promoted by 'repressors' with that of the 'oppressed,'" and revolves around the understanding that "grave

¹¹⁷ Bishai, "Forgetting Ourselves," 3.

¹¹⁸ Priscilla B. Hayner, "Fifteen Truth Commissions—1974 to 1994: A Comparative Study," *Human Rights Quarterly* 16, No. 4 (1994): 608 and 611-3.

¹¹⁹ Brian Havel, "Public Law and the Construction of Collective Memory," in *Post- Conflict Justice*, ed. M. Cherif Bassiouni (Ardsley, NY: Transnational Publishers, 2001), 389.

¹²⁰ Cattell and Climo, "Meaning in Social Memory and History," 32-3.

¹²¹ Natzman, "Remembering and Forgetting," 162 and 164.

¹²² Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths*, 160 and 163.

human rights violations even in times of national security can never be justified."¹²³ This, certainly, is what truth commissions do, which makes the Laplante and Phenicie's comments so interesting. The authors believe that the media ought to contribute to the creation of consensus about the past. Journalists should, thus, take a "short-term detour from traditional journalism" and its focus on objectivity and reporting "what each side says" and contribute to the goals of transitional justice by promoting this consensus that past human rights violations were wrong. The authors' argument about the "short-term detour" is, as they acknowledge, paradoxical. Indeed, they argue that the goals of transitional justice itself are paradoxical. Transitional justice aims to foster respect for human rights, which certainly includes free speech and freedom of the press, and understands public discussion and dialogue as essential to the overarching goal of reconciliation. Yet, "by definition, transitional justice projects [such as truth commissions] promote one version of the past: (1) human rights violations occurred, and (2) they were morally and legally wrong." With such a common understanding of the past as the foundation of transitional justice, there is, in the end, little room for the debate and dialogue which freedom of expression allows.¹²⁴ The shorter term goals of transitional justice (i.e., free speech), thus, take precedence over the longer term functioning of a democracy. In this view, "the media's emulation of the classic aims of journalistic objectivity may actually undermine transitional justice goals, especially when a society needs a new direction in public discourse." They argue that objective journalism (which Salvadoran journalist Carlos Dada declares does not exist¹²⁵) "does not always ensure a fruitful discussion that leads to the establishment of a collective memory and national reconciliation. It may do just the opposite, perpetuating polarity and distracting society from the content of transitional justice work, which seeks to set the record straight about unlawful violations of human rights."¹²⁶

¹²³ Lisa J. Laplante and Kelly Phenicie, "Media, Trials and Truth Commissions: 'Mediating' Reconciliation in Peru's Transitional Justice Process," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 4 (2010): 209-10 and 227. Clearly, this kind of statement assumes a universal understanding of what human rights are, likely based on the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The universality of human rights, however, is not a given. See for example, Dianne Otto, "Rethinking the 'Universality' of Human Rights Law," *Columbia Human Rights Law Review* 29 (1997): 1-46; Christina M. Cerna, "Universality of Human Rights and Cultural Diversity: Implementation of Human Rights in Different Socio-Cultural Contexts," *Human Rights Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1994): 740-752; Jack Donnelly, "The Relative Universality of Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2007): 281-306.

¹²⁴ Laplante and Phenicie, "Media, Trials and Truth Commissions," 227.

¹²⁵ Carlos Dada, "The Case for Yes," International Center for Transitional Justice, last modified 18 June 2014, <http://www.ictj.org/debate/article/case-yes>.

¹²⁶ Laplante and Phenicie, "Media, Trials and Truth Commissions," 209.

Laplanche and Phenicie's view on this issue are only *perhaps* on the other hand because Natzman's idea of reconciliation as incorporating different memories of the past into the narrative of the past, like Hayner's belief that reconciliation should be rooted in "a generally agreed understanding of a country's history and past wrongs," is vague. Where they end and where Laplanche and Phenicie's one version of the past centered on the fact that "human rights violations occurred" and that "they were morally and legally wrong" begins is unclear. Or perhaps they overlap? Perhaps "human rights were violated and it was wrong" is the common, if basic, understanding of the past Hayner talks about?

This dissertation uses ideas about discursive/social/memory/truth frameworks, commemoration, and truth commissions to help explore the way that Salvadorans and Guatemalans have tried to answer Runia's question: "Who are we that this could have happened?" The question is exceedingly relevant, though it might more appropriately be rephrased as, "Who are they that they could have done this to us?," for this seems to be the question many in Guatemala and El Salvador ask as they engage in post-Peace soul-searching. In attempting to answer this question, and often in an effort to ensure non-repetition, Guatemalans and Salvadorans write narratives of their respective conflicts that certainly, and necessarily, contain many silences about the past. The narratives they write in the name of nation-building actively forget parts of the past so as to highlight other parts of it. The shape these narratives take, of course, depends on group membership and on which framework or regime of truth dominates.

This dissertation explores unstable moments when struggles between competing frameworks, memories, and narratives of the past are most clearly revealed, as well as the stories of the past that emerge in these moments. These are moments when, significantly, truth or truth-like commission investigate the past, gather testimony, and publish their reports, and when the past forces its way into the present, forcing the social body to scream out. These are also moments when the narrative of the past itself is written, and when frameworks which determine how the past will be talked about and what parts of the past will be understood as true are challenged, and even shift. Despite criticisms of both truth commissions and commemoration, they are key in the creation and negotiation of discursive/social/memory/truth frameworks and the narratives of the past that these frameworks shape.

Ideas about frameworks, commemoration, and truth commissions, therefore, help to explore larger questions about the place of the past in the present and future and how the past is talked about in post-Peace El Salvador and Guatemala. They do not help answer the question of whether it is better to remember or forget, though certainly many authors have addressed that question. Søren Kierkegaard, for example, suggests that one must both remember and forget, because, "in order to be complete, [each individual] must live as much in the hope that stems from forgetting as in the continuity that is produced by recollection"¹²⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche argues more forcefully for forgetting. He states, "life in any true sense is absolutely impossible without forgetfulness." Happiness is rooted in "the power of forgetting" and for those who cannot forget, happiness will remain illusive. He continues his argument in favor of forgetting, stating, "we must know the right time to forget as well as the right time to remember."¹²⁸ It is very possible, therefore, to remember too much. Nietzsche echoes Ernest Renan's views on the forgetting. In his lecture on nation-building, given in 1882, Renan argues that "forgetting, I would even say historical error, is essential to the creation of a nation." For Renan, the creation of a nation requires that its members "have a great deal in common and also that they have forgotten a great deal."¹²⁹ Marc Augé, for his part, writes, "Oblivion is a necessity both to society and to the individual. One must know how to forget in order to taste the full flavor of the present, of the moment, and of expectation, but memory itself needs forgetfulness."¹³⁰

Finally, in her discussion of the Spanish Civil War and the role it played in the democratization of Spain, Paloma Aguilar explores the issue of forgetting, of amnesia, in the creation of a new nation, reconciled with itself and its past. Drawing on the work of Trevor Lummis, Aguilar suggests that amnesia and memory are equally important. Lummis argues that the parts of the past that are silenced are dangerous, and often more so than the past that is remembered; however, as Aguilar writes, and much as Gross argued, "amnesia can also be as important as memory in cementing the peaceful bonding of a nation."¹³¹ Amnesia, with the same

¹²⁷ Gross, *Lost Time*, 139

¹²⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History*, trans. Adrian Collins (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co, Inc., 1949), 6-8.

¹²⁹ Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce que qu'une une nation? / What is a Nation?*, trans. Wanda Romer Taylor (Toronto: Tapir Press, 1996), 19-20. He also argued that "the advance of historical study often poses a threat to nationality, for historical inquiry, in effect, brings to light the violent events that are at the source of all political formations, even those whose consequences have been beneficial."

¹³⁰ Marc Augé, *Oblivion*, trans. Marjolijn de Jager (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 3.

¹³¹ Paloma Aguilar, *Memory and Amnesia: The Role of the Spanish Civil War in the Transition to Democracy*, trans. Mark Oakley (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 15.

root as amnesty, becomes even more important when "offenses which must be pardoned are so unpalatable that reconciliation is only possible through amnesia."¹³²

For these authors, therefore, the answer to the question of whether the past should be remembered or forgotten is that it must be remembered *and* forgotten if the future is to be more peaceful than the past. This view echos the epigraph that opened this chapter. Memory, Todorov writes, is incomplete and biased forgetting, and both are essential. Though, as will be seen in the following chapters, this view of memory is not commonly heard in either Guatemala or El Salvador, it is useful to keep it in mind. Perhaps, rather than ask if the past should be forgotten or remembered (rather than view the place of the past in the present and in future in black and white), a more productive question is to ask what we should remember to forget, and what we should forget to remember. Recognizing that remembering requires forgetting and that forgetting requires memory, recognizing the nuance and complexity which are inherent in the seemingly straightforward ideas of memory and forgetting, might offer a way beyond the memory/oblivion dichotomy which further divides many post-conflict societies, and so might contribute to the always illusive and poorly defined reconciliation societies emerging from periods of violence so desire and to which transitional justice projects like truth commissions and commemoration hope to contribute.

¹³² Aguilar, *Memory and Amnesia*, 17-18.

Chapter Two

Guatemala: Schizophrenic Memory

El pasado es siempre una morada. Cuando nos mudamos al presente, a veces alimentamos la ilusión de que cerrando aquella casa con tres candados (digamos perdón, la ingratitud o el simple olvido) nos vamos a ver libres de ella para siempre. Sin embargo, no podemos evitar que una parte de nosotros quede allí, coleccionando goces o rencores, transmutando los momificados hechos, en delirios, visiones o pesadillas.¹

On 29 December 1996, amidst much fanfare, the "Accord for a Firm and Lasting Peace" was signed, officially ending Guatemala 36-year long conflict. From then until the 26 April 1998 assassination of monseñor Juan Gerardi, various actors worked to make sure that, as Steve Stern pointed out in Chile, memories of the conflict would remain sealed in a memory box and destined for oblivion.² The Ley de la Reconciliación Nacional, better known as the Amnesty Law, was passed on 27 December 1996 and was the most significant of the range of discursive and legislative tactics used to promote forgetting. Paul Ricoeur has suggested that amnesty laws are a form of "institutional forgetting." He adds that, "the proximity, which is more than phonetic, or even semantic, between amnesty and amnesia signals the existence of a secret pact with the denial of memory, which...distances it from forgiving, after first suggesting a close simulation."³ Indeed, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines amnesia as a loss of memory, from the Greek root meaning "forgetfulness."⁴ The first definition listed for amnesty is "forgetfulness, oblivion; an intentional overlooking," while the second entry narrows the definition to "an act of oblivion, a general overlooking or pardon of past offenses, by the ruling authority." As with "amnesia," the *Oxford English Dictionary* locates the root of the word in Greek, though for amnesty the Greek root is oblivion, or not remembering.⁵ This is also true for the Spanish, *amnestia* and *amnesia*. Given that the Reconciliation Law was commonly called the Amnesty

¹ "The past is always a dwelling. When we relocate to the present, sometimes we feed the illusion/hope that by closing that house with locks (lets say *perdón*, ingratitude or simply forgetting) we will be free from it forever. However, we cannot prevent a part of us from staying there, collecting pleasures and rancors, transforming mummified acts into wild dreams, visions or nightmares; Mario Benedetti, *Variaciones sobre el Olvido*, (Rivas-Vaciamadrid, Spain: H Kliczkowski-Onlybook, SL, 2005), 13.

² Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 112.

³ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 453.

⁴ Oxford English Dictionary, "Amnesia," <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/6483?redirectedFrom=amnesia&>.

⁵ Oxford English Dictionary, "Amnesty," <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/6488?rskey=P5fJZa&result=1#eid>.

Law, the forgetfulness of amnesty easily attached itself to reconciliation. As for Ricoeur, the etymological roots led him to assert that amnesty is nothing more than forced forgetting. He wrote that,

It is certainly useful—this is the right word—to recall that everyone has committed crimes, to set a limit to the revenge of the conquerors, and to avoid compounding the excesses of combat with the excesses of justice. More than anything, it is useful, as it was in the time of the Greeks and the Romans, to reaffirm national unity by a liturgy of language, extended by the ceremonies of hymns and public celebrations. But is it not a defect in this imaginary unity that it erases from the official memory the examples of crimes likely to protect the future from the errors of the past and, by depriving public opinion of the benefits of *dissensus*, of condemning competing memories to an unhealthy underground existence?⁶

Ricoeur's assertion that the way that amnesty fades into amnesia prevents past crimes from serving as a warning or as an example to the future finds many echoes in Guatemala's post-Peace discourse.

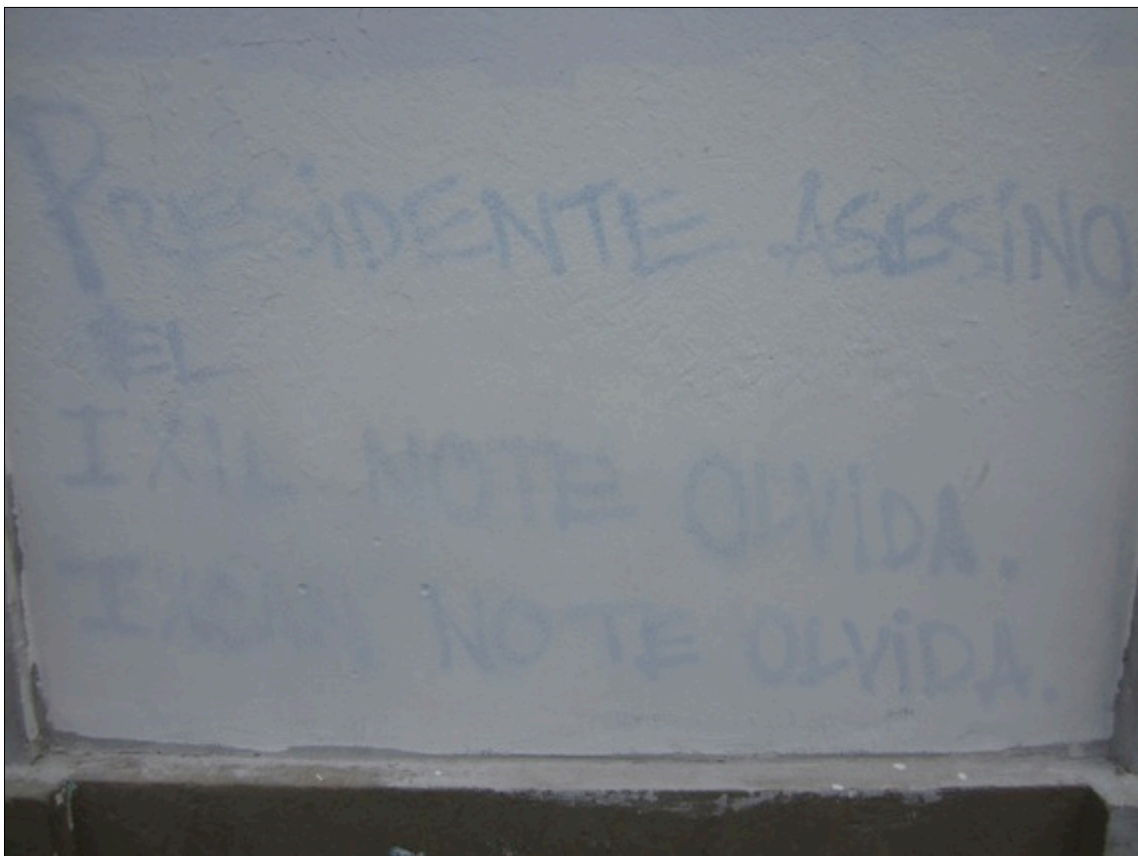
The passage of the Amnesty Law was part of a move to promote amnesia and forgetting behind the guise of reconciliation. It sought to forget the crimes themselves and responsibility for them. Closely tied to the issue of reconciliation/amnesty and forgetting, is that of *perdón*. *Perdón* and the verb *perdonar* have many meanings. As expected, it means pardon in the legal sense, but it also means forgiveness, and even absolution. Given the legal nature of amnesties, it is possible to assume that *perdón* was often used in the legal sense in discussions about the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional. However, *perdón* was also increasingly used in official discourse and in the media to mean forgiveness, highlighting not only the importance of context in understanding the word, but also its flexibility. As *perdón*-pardon shifted to *perdón*-forgiveness, the connection to amnesty and forgetting the crimes, responsibility, and the conflict itself remained. When conservative governments were involved, forgiveness meant that the relatives were denied justice. To maintain some of the fluidity of the word *perdón*, the Spanish will be used here.

This chapter peels back the layers of meaning or intention that lie hidden below the surface of the things people say about the conflict. The focus of this chapter is the un-said, that which lurks beneath the dominant discourse (discussed in the next chapter). The archaeological project involved in exploring the implications of or intentions behind discourse is akin to

⁶ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 452-3.

pentimento, when an artist "repents," or changes her mind about the work and paints over her original idea. With time, as Lillian Hellman described, as paint fades, it is sometimes possible to see through the top layer of paint to the layers below; "a tree will show through a woman's dress, a child makes way for a dog, a large boat is no longer on an open sea." "Perhaps," she wrote, "it would be as well to say that the old conception, replaced by a later choice, is a way of seeing and then seeing again."⁷

In Guatemala's post-Peace discursive framework, the issue is less about one artist repenting and more about one artist trying to cover over the work of a different artist, as seen in the photo below. The original graffiti appeared on the side of a government building in



"Assassin President. The Ixil does not forget you. The Ixcán does not forget you."
Photo by author. 15 March 2012.

downtown Guatemala City shortly after the inauguration of president Otto Pérez Molina in January 2012. Less than a day passed before the message had been painted over with a thin layer of white paint. This process is identical to the discursive struggles that exist in Guatemala. The

⁷ Lillian Hellman, *Pentimento: A Book of Portraits* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 3.

broader human rights community insists that Guatemalans talk about the conflict and that they do so within the framework that demands that the past be remembered so that it never happens again, as will seen in the next chapter. This is the tree in the original version of Hellman's painting. Those who prefer that the past be forgotten—those who would rather see a woman wearing a skirt than a tree—"paint over" the discursive framework by speaking of reconciliation and *perdón*. They paint over the tree, hoping to mask it completely. Yet they cannot paint an entirely different picture than the one that already existed. They must work within what is already on the canvas to make sure that their addition is not out of place; they must speak of amnesty, reconciliation, and *perdón* in order to promote forgetting.

The Ley de Reconciliación Nacional as Forgetting

Guatemala's Ley de Reconciliación Nacional is rooted in the idea that to achieve "reconciliation," to achieve a "firm and lasting peace," certain political crimes and common crimes connected to them should not be prosecuted. The exceptions, listed in Article 8, were "genocide, torture, and forced disappearance," as well as other crimes included in international agreements Guatemala signed. The Amnesty Law was overwhelmingly approved in Congress days before the final Peace Accords were signed. While what exactly lawmakers thought "reconciliation" was remained unclear, who would be reconciled did not. Lawmakers, as stated in Article 1, understood the law to be, "a basic instrument to achieve the reconciliation of those people involved in the internal armed confrontation." This is precisely what Ricoeur pointed to as the reason behind decrees which mandated institutional forgetting; amnesties, he affirmed, were directed toward the "reconciliation of enemy citizens" and toward "civil peace."⁸ Gustavo Palma, of the Asociación para el Avance de las Ciencias Sociales en Guatemala (AVANCSO, Association for the Advance of the Social Sciences in Guatemala), repeated this reasoning the day the Peace was signed, and was among the first to highlight the connection to forgetting. He wrote that both the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional and the mandate of the Comisión de Esclarecimiento Histórico (CEH, Historical Clarification Commission) were very obviously meant to "submerge in forgetting the whole series of tremendous and undeniable acts of terror

⁸ Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 453.

and violence which took place in the recent past," but to do so "under the pretext of protecting national unity."⁹

Given the contents of Article 1 and the details of the amnesty, the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional was clearly oriented toward "reconciling" those who had been actively involved in the conflict, those who had taken up arms or had been forced to, and also those who had negotiated the peace. The law made no mention of how other Guatemalans, specifically non-combatants, might fit into the picture. Human rights and anti-impunity activist Helen Mack investigated why this was the case. She argued that the idea of reconciliation that reigns in Guatemala, as seen in the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional, was rooted in the Central American peace processes of the 1980s. At that time, reconciliation was "only and exclusively understood as the laying down of arms and as ceasefire."¹⁰ In the Guatemalan peace process, as Mack wrote in a piece about the "absent process" of reconciliation in Guatemala, reconciliation was only present in the agreement about reincorporating the guerrilla into civilian life; that is, reconciliation was only discussed in relation to the agreement that laid the legal foundation for what would become the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional.¹¹ In this Agreement on the Basis for the Legal Integration of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG, Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity), the signatories agreed that, "Guatemalan society needs to develop conditions conducive to reconciliation and lasting governability" and that "the legal integration of members of the URNG, in full exercise of their constitutional rights and duties and in security and dignity, will contribute to the democratic process and its consolidation, the restoration of the social fabric in Guatemala, reconciliation and the establishment of a firm and lasting peace." As a result, among other measures, the signatories agreed that Congress would draft a "National Reconciliation Act whose object shall be, in accordance with the spirit and content of the Peace Agreements, to promote a culture of harmony and mutual respect that will eliminate any form of revenge or vengeance, while safeguarding the fundamental rights of the victims, as prerequisites for a firm

⁹ Gustavo Palma Murga, "La memoria histórica y la firma de la paz," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 29 December 1996.

¹⁰ Fundación Myrna Mack, "Justicia Transicional: Una Deuda Pendiente (Extracto de un Estudio a Publicarse en marzo del 2010 Titulado Procesos de Justicia Transicional: ¿Cómo Están Cumpliendo los Estados latinoamericanos con los Estándares Internacionales?)," 10 January 2010.

¹¹ Helen Mack, "La Reconciliación en Guatemala: Un Proceso Ausente," in *Verdad, Justicia y Reparación: Desafíos para la Democracia y la Convivencia Social*, eds. Gilda Pacheco Oreamuno, Lorena Acevedo Narea, and Guido Galli (Stockholm and San José, Costa Rica: Instituto Internacional para la Democracia y la Asistencia Electoral / Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos, 2005), 196.

and lasting peace."¹² As Mack wrote, reconciliation in the Peace Accords was about *not* holding those who had committed certain crimes legally responsible.¹³ This is why the left-leaning Frente Democrático Nueva Guatemala (FDNG, New Guatemalan Democratic Front) voted against the law, arguing that it was little more than an amnesty for the military and the guerrilla,¹⁴ and it is why discussions about the law often revolved around amnesty rather than around reconciliation, leading to the words becoming associated.

The failure to speak of reconciliation other than in the sense of amnesty meant that reconciliation was tied to *perdón* and forgetting.¹⁵ Mack asserted, "this omission was, without a doubt, deliberate, because the concept of 'reconciliation' inevitably requires the promotion of large scale social, political, and institutional transformations, something which Guatemalan society has not been prepared for, especially not the groups which hold power unlawfully." Understanding reconciliation as related to *perdón* and forgetting excludes "institutional transformations, economic improvement, the reconstruction of a social fabric damaged by so many years of war, the repairing of personal and interpersonal trust, the recuperation of the dignity of those who survived the violence, and the search for social justice," all of the essential aspects of what Mack knew reconciliation to be. Mack concluded that, since the Peace was signed, those with political, economic, or social power "have tried to establish the ideas of 'wiping the slate clean,' of 'looking to the future and not toward the past,' and of 'not seeking reprisals or vengeance' as synonyms for reconciliation."¹⁶ For activists like Mack, these phrases were also all understood to be synonymous with forgetting.

The Ley de Reconciliación Nacional was explicitly associated with forgetting from the beginning. It was, FDNG representatives said, "the Law of *Perdón* and Forgetting."¹⁷ Despite the FDNG's opposition to the law, other parties supported the law. Such support was no doubt due to the fact that many agreed with Acisclo Valladares Molina, former Attorney General and two-time presidential candidate, who wrote in *El Periódico* in 2007 that "those who were in power

¹² "Agreement on the Basis for the Legal Integration of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca," United States Institute for Peace, http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/peace_agreements/guat_961212.pdf.

¹³ Mack, "La Reconciliación en Guatemala," 196.

¹⁴ "En Vigencia la Ley de la Reconciliación Nacional," *Prensa Libre*, 29 December 1996.

¹⁵ Helen Mack, *Verdad y Justicia: Discursos y Ponencias Escogidos* (Guatemala City: Fundación Myrna Mack, 2007), 164-5.

¹⁶ Mack, "La Reconciliación en Guatemala," 196-7.

¹⁷ "En vigencia la Ley de la Reconciliación Nacional," *Prensa Libre*, 29 December 1996.

were not ready to accept that peace meant that they would have to spend the rest of their days in prison, and nor were those who wished to achieve power. Peace and amnesty, therefore, were inseparable: take them or leave them, but together." "Both sides needed the amnesty," he continued, "without it, the peace would not have been signed."¹⁸ Valladares Molina repeated this two days later in another piece, titled "Ingratitude." In this second piece, his dislike for the Amnesty Law was clearer; he described it as a "truly cruel institution" and as "the final slap in the face for the victims." Nevertheless, he repeated that the amnesty, which made it "as if the crimes had never been committed," was necessary.¹⁹ With the amnesty, more than simply forgetting criminal responsibility, based on Valladares Molina's words, the crimes themselves would be forgotten.

Criticisms of the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional, such as those made by the FDNG and, to some extent, Valladares Molina, were based on the way the amnesty promoted forgetting past crimes and not just evading criminal responsibility for them.²⁰ Yet as much as critics would accuse the law of promoting forgetting, the law nevertheless itself does not openly call for forgetting. Rather, in Article 10, the Law supported the search for truth. The Law decried the CEH as contributing to making the "historical truth" of the armed conflict known "to prevent such acts from being repeated" and re-confirmed the State's support for the body, declaring that State institutions "should provide the required support to the Commission."²¹ Indeed, when the CEH began investigating the conflict the Procurador de Derechos Humanos (Human Rights Ombudsman), Julio Arango Escobar, and the head of the Secretaría de la Paz (Sepaz, Secretary of the Peace), Raquel Zelaya, used Article 10 to criticize the State for not providing information to the Commission.²²

Far from calling for forgetting, the Amnesty Law required memory. Before amnesty could be granted, something had to be remembered. Before amnesty could be granted, the crime had to be recognized. Especially in the case of the victims of state terrorism, the first step toward

¹⁸ Acisclo Valladares Molina, "¿Fue necesaria la amnistía?" *El Periódico*, 27 March 2007, <http://www.elperiodico.com.gt/es/20080327/opinion/51062/>.

¹⁹ Acisclo Valladares Molina, "Ingratitud" *El Periódico*, 29 March 2007, <http://www.elperiodico.com.gt/es/20080329/opinion/51282/>.

²⁰ Others had more concrete complaints about the Amnesty Law. See, for example, Alfredo Balsells Tojo, "La inconstitucionalidad de la Ley de Reconciliación," *El Periódico*, 23 January 1997; "Interponen recurso contra Ley de Reconciliación Nacional," *El Periódico*, 4 January 1997.

²¹ Ley de Reconciliación Nacional.

²² "Arango: La CEH debería ser más firme," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 3 April 1998; "Esclarecimiento Histórico: Arango denuncia falta de colaboración," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 7 April 1998.

amnesty was remembering both the crime and the victim's work, and so remembering why they had been killed. For the human rights community, remembering the victims' work was so important because their work was a powerful indictment of the many kinds of injustice in Guatemala, injustices that the victims were trying to eliminate and which remained in the post-Peace era. Remembering the victims' work reminded Guatemalans that there was still work to be done. For these reasons, it was dangerous for those who wished to maintain the status quo.

The way the amnesty dictated what could be remembered can be seen in the Myrna Mack and Jorge Carpio Nicolle cases. Myrna Mack was an anthropologist who worked with communities that had been displaced by the military's scorched earth campaigns, campaigns that she denounced. A death squad killed her on 11 September 1990. Jorge Carpio Nicolle, on the other hand, was a journalist and politician who founded the Unión del Centro Nacional (UCN, National Centrist Union) in 1984. Defeated in the second round of the 1990 presidential elections, Carpio remained active in politics until the paramilitary Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PACs, Civil Self-defense Patrols) assassinated him on 3 July 1993. In the Mack case, defense attorneys declared that they would seek amnesty for their defendants not because their defendants were or were not guilty, but because the assassination was a political crime; the assassination was part of the conflict and so was covered by the amnesty. They used Myrna Mack's sister Helen Mack's statements that the crime had been politically motivated to make their case. Furthermore, the lawyers wondered how it was even possible to separate Myrna Mack's assassination from the conflict given the fact that she had worked with those who had been displaced as a direct result of it.²³ The defense for the PACs accused of assassinating Carpio sought amnesty for their clients using a similar strategy. The lawyers argued that Carpio's widow had always asserted that the crime was political, and so the defendants could be protected by the amnesty.²⁴

²³ "Amnistía para militares," *El Periódico*, 6 January 1997; Martín Juárez, "Militares piden ser perdonados," *El Periódico*, 7 January 1997. The Attorney General and courts finally agreed that neither the intellectual nor the material authors of the crime, the latter of whom had sought amnesty after the former did, would receive amnesty since Myrna Mack's assassination had not been committed within the framework of the conflict, as required by the law. (Martín Juárez, "Beteta también quiere el perdón," *El Periódico*, 9 January 1997; Julia Corado, "Sala deniega amnistía a militares sindicados del asesinato de Myrna Mack," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 11 September 1997; and "A siete años del crimen de Myrna Mack, Sala deniega amnistía a militares acusados," *Prensa Libre*, 11 September 1997.) The intellectual authors were later found guilty.

²⁴ Martín Juárez, "Presuntos asesinos de Carpio se acogerán a la amnistía," *El Periódico*, 11 January 1997. Little has come of the case.

In these and many other cases, lawyers were required to demonstrate, first, that the perpetrators had served in the military or the guerrilla or had been members of a state institution and, second, that the crimes had been committed in the context of the conflict and so were politically motivated.²⁵ Thus, in this initial period after the Peace, soldiers and patrollers who were accused of having committed certain human rights violations and the lawyers who represented them remembered the political nature of the conflict, and indeed insisted that the violations had been part of it.

Amnesty, therefore, was not only amnesia. In seeking amnesty, the political had to be remembered and proven so that the crime would be forgotten.²⁶ As well, and stepping back, remembering the crime and details about it, including the political motivation behind a particular crime, ultimately showed that the official version of what had happened (a version which suggested, for example, that male activists had not been disappeared, but had run off with their mistresses²⁷) was not how events had unfolded. In these cases the amnesty allowed "the historic truth" of the past to be known.

Despite applications for amnesty in a few cases after Gerardi was assassinated, such as in the Dos Erres and El Jute cases, as well as in the case against *genocidaire*, Efraín Ríos Montt,²⁸ most discussions about amnesty were concentrated in the years between the Peace Accords and Gerardi's assassination. In this time period especially, for there to be any hope that their crimes would be covered by the amnesty, these crimes and their political nature had first to be

²⁵ In the first years of the post-Peace era, the only successful applications for amnesty mentioned in the newspapers were made by guerrillas. See, for example, "Otorgan libertad a primer guerrillero amparado en Ley de Reconciliación," *Prensa Libre*, 28 February 1997; "Segundo guerrillero fue beneficiado con amnistía," *Prensa Libre*, 2 March 1997; "Gaspar Ilom no puede ser detenido al ingresar al país, dice Pablo Monsanto," *Prensa Libre*, 6 February 1997; "Gaspar Ilom podría arribar al país después de Semana Santa," *Prensa Libre*, 16 March 1997. Lawyers of those tied to state security apparatuses had a difficult time convincing judges to grant amnesty to their clients. See, for example, the Cándido Noriega case ("Sala declara sin lugar amnistía a favor de excomisionado Noriega," *Prensa Libre*, 28 February 1997; "Fiscalía rechaza petición de amnistía de Cándido Noriega," *Prensa Libre*, 12 February 1997; "No procede amnistía a sindicato de 38 asesinatos," *El Periódico*, 18 January 1997.)

²⁶ This stands in stark contrast to the tactics of re-labeling commonly used to encourage the forgetting of politically motivated post-Peace crime. For post-Peace crimes, as in Gerardi's assassination and attacks against human rights defenders, various state representatives and members of Guatemala's conservative sectors vocally rejected the political, and hoped to convince the Guatemalan public by talking about the crimes as common and by proposing theories about robbery and sex to distract from the victims' work.

²⁷ Member of the Asociación Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos de Guatemala (Famdegua, Association of the Family Members of the Detained-Disappeared of Guatemala), conversation with author, 26 March 2012.

²⁸ Estuardo Paredes and Verónica Gamboa, "Juez niega amnistía a Ríos Montt," *Prensa Libre*, 15 December 2014, http://www.prensalibre.com/noticias/Juez-niega-amnistia-Rios-Montt-Guatemala-Conflicto-Armado-Video-exmilitar_3_655764420.html.

remembered. While defense attorneys reminded the courts that the assassinations of Myrna Mack and Jorge Carpio Nicolle were political, just as Helen Mack and Marta de Carpio had said over and over again, the prosecution was forced to navigate between the desire to confirm their political nature while seeking to punish the perpetrators.

Those so critical of the Amnesty Law may have felt slightly hopeful as soldiers and other members of state institutions were consistently refused amnesty. This hope surely disappeared as it became clear that those who sought to keep Guatemala's memory box open would do so at their own risk.²⁹ The rejection of amnesty applications also meant that amnesty, and the at least temporary remembering it involved, was not the best way to encourage forgetting. The even short-lived presence of the past in the public sphere which applications for amnesty required was, perhaps, still too much remembering for certain sectors.

Perdón as Forgetting

Forgetting was also pushed on the country by the use of the word *perdón*. *Perdón*, again, has various meanings. This can be seen in *Prensa Libre*'s 1997 report about Edelberto Torres-Rivas' response to the Amnesty Law. Torres-Rivas, one of Guatemala's leading academics, wrote in the inaugural issue of *Diálogo*, the monthly publication of the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO, Latin America Social Sciences Institute), that with the Law, "the possibility to *perdonar* common crimes committed in connection with political crimes has been opened." For Torres-Rivas, *perdón* for the crimes was possible, as long as this was done with the support of "the only people capable of granting it," "the offended, their families, and society itself."³⁰ While Torres-Rivas started out using *perdón* to mean pardon, the forgetting of criminal responsibility for a crime, in the end, the understanding of the word became more like forgiveness. It is not pardon that only the families can grant, for pardon is something the courts grant. Relatives of the victims are, however, the only ones who can forgive the perpetrators.

Helen Mack's piece, "Amnesty and Impunities," also makes this clear. Using *perdón* much as Torres-Rivas had, Mack wrote that when the idea to seek justice for crimes committed during the conflict arises, "forgetting and *perdón* without prior judgment are proposed." Yet, "peace and reconciliation cannot be constructed on top of the victims' pain, nor on top of

²⁹ Human rights activists are consistently threatened in relation to their work.

³⁰ "Gobierno abre posibilidad de perdonar crímenes contra civiles, señala FLACSO," *Prensa Libre*, 7 March 1997. The author was unable to obtain a copy of the original investigation.

forgetting converted into impunity." The state, she wrote, "can *perdonar* the acts which have affected it, such as the armed uprising. That is to say, it is authorized to forget or *perdonar* the crimes which...threatened it, such as rebellion, treason," and other crimes which took place in the context of the war. But the state does not "have the right to forget and *perdonar* in the name of those who suffered political violence which originated in the internal armed conflict."³¹ Only those who suffered can *perdonar*. Mack's use of *perdón* points to the word's fluidity. For Ricoeur, "the question of forgiving arises when there has been an indictment, a finding of guilt, and a sentencing." Yet when an amnesty exists, the possibility of determining guilt is usually denied. Thus, in the passage of amnesty laws, he argued, the "boundary between forgetting and forgiving is crossed surreptitiously,"³² and the danger exists that forgetting a political crime will melt into forgiving that crime, without the necessary acknowledgement of responsibility.

The discursive connection made between amnesty and *perdón*, though the word is not used in the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional, is more clearly seen in newspaper reports from early 1997 that describe applications to benefit from the "Law of *Perdón* and Forgetting." The intellectual authors of Myrna Mack's assassination, for example, "ask to be *perdonados*," they ask to be pardoned/forgiven. This, at least, was the headline *El Periódico* used for the article.³³ The newspaper repeated this the following two days. On 8 January, "the accused for Xamán ask for *perdón*," while on 9 January, Noel Betata, the soldier who had already been convicted as the material author in Myrna Mack's assassination, "also wants *perdón*."³⁴ The idea that reconciliation/amnesty/forgetting were tied to *perdón* can clearly be seen in other pieces. In early January 1997, for example, Alfredo Balsells Tojo likened the Amnesty Law to forgetting and wrote that both sides had agreed to it as a way to "*perdonar* themselves for the offenses inflicted." "They ask for *perdón*," he wrote, "they ask for forgetting, but they do not want to talk about justice as the minimum tribute that should be paid to their compatriots sacrificed in this deaf war, this hidden war, but a war impossible to deny."³⁵ The Amnesty Law, and the related concept of *perdón*, promoted forgetting—a not knowing, an ignorance, a lack of memory about the atrocities of the past. Thus, in discussions about the Amnesty Law, reconciliation, amnesty,

³¹ Helen Mack, "Amnestía e impunidad," in *Verdad y Justicia: Discursos y Ponencias Escogidos*, ed. Helen Mack (Guatemala City: Fundación Myrna Mack, 2007), 34-5.

³² Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 452-3.

³³ Martín Juárez, "Militares piden ser perdonados," *El Periódico*, 7 January 1997.

³⁴ Martín Juárez, "Acusados de Xamán solicitan perdón," *El Periódico*, 8 January 1997; Martín Juárez, "Beteta también quiere el perdón," *El Periódico*, 9 January 1997.

³⁵ Alfredo Balsells Tojo, "¿Cuál guerra sucia?" *El Periódico*, 30 January 1997.

forgetting, and *perdón* are spoken of in one breath, creating a sort of discursive continuum where amnesty and *perdón* are seen as steps on the path to reconciliation and forgetting, as necessary pre-requisites for them, or as synonymous with them.

As *perdón*-pardon became *perdón*-forgiveness, as discussions of amnesty/amnesia became fewer, the relationship between *perdón* and forgetting became clearer. In his speech the day the final Peace Accord was signed, then-president Alvaro Arzú highlighted the importance of *perdón* and called for "*perdón* without forgetting." Citing Pope John Paul II, he explained that peace required a sincere *perdón* that eliminated any aspirations for vengeance. Yet he added that *perdón* did not mean forgetting; after all, "a people who wish to reconcile themselves need historical memory."³⁶ In his speech, Arzú tried to separate forgetting and *perdón*, speaking of them almost as binaries.

Arzú's speech, made before applications for amnesty had been submitted and before debates about it had taken place, did not generate much discussion about *perdón* in the media. However, his announcement two years later that he would ask for *perdón* for the "excesses" committed during the conflict did generate significant debate. Arzú made his announcement at a critical moment. In December 1998, the first guilty verdict for a massacre committed during the conflict was passed down and three patrollers were condemned to death, a sentence which was appealed before the month ended; the twists and turns of the Gerardi case continued as the government's attorney stepped down, archbishop Próspero Penados Barrios accused the military of the assassination and the government accused the Valle del Sol criminal group, and the priest involved in the assassination was admitted to hospital; an armed group operating in the southwestern part of the country was rumored to be composed of ex-guerrillas; investigations into a 1982 massacre in Nebaj got underway; the case related to the Xamán massacre also continued twisting and turning; David Stoll's book, *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*, was published, sparking some debate about Menchú's "lies," (this, of course, days after she had met with French president Jacques Chirac and her work was celebrated); the campaigns related to the constitutional referendum continued; and, last but certainly not least, the country waited (im)patiently for the publication of the CEH report. The climate in Guatemala was tense, to say the least.

³⁶ Ramón Hernández and Emilio Godoy, "Arzú dice: Misión cumplido y llama a un perdón sin olvido," *Prensa Libre*, 30 December 1996; Anna Fresse, "Arzú exhorta al pueblo a perdonarse," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 30 December 1996.

A glance at the headlines in December 1998 is enough to see that Arzú's announcement would not ease tensions. *Prensa Libre*, for example, published "A polemical *perdón*" the day after Arzú's initial announcement.³⁷ That Arzú's decision was indeed polemical is clear, not only from the range of passionate reactions to it, but also from the fact that he felt the need to repeat his call for *perdón* in the middle of the month.³⁸ *Prensa Libre* followed this up on the front page on 29 December with "Debate about *perdón* two years after the Peace." *El Periódico* opted to announce that, "Arzú's proposal generates criticisms."³⁹ For *Siglo Veintiuno*, it was "The most controversial *perdón*" and "The *perdón* of discord."⁴⁰ The articles, as can be expected, were full of the opinions and reactions of various individuals from a range of social and political sectors, some expressing support for the *perdón* and others wholeheartedly rejecting it.

Looking beyond the headlines, the editors of *Prensa Libre* wrote in December 1998 that Arzú's plan to ask for *perdón* was not only about *perdón*; it would also contribute to the "achievement of forgetting, not understood as synonymous with impunity, but as the acceptance that, as a country and as a human group, we Guatemalans were victims of circumstance beyond our control which erased the division between 'the good' and 'the bad,' which made all of us responsible for what happened, whether for action or omission."⁴¹ At other times, of course, the editors had called for memory. Vice president of *Prensa Libre*, Mario Antonio Sandoval, contributed to the same issue of *Prensa Libre*. His piece, "*Perdón*, forgetting and knowing," echoed support for *perdón*, highlighting the fact that, given Arzú's role in the repressive Lucas García and Serrano Elias regimes, he had a personal reason to ask for *perdón*. He also made the connection between *perdón* and forgetting when he wrote, "deep pain requires a heavy dose of forgetting." Underscoring the importance he clearly placed on requests for *perdón*, he went on to argue that the guerrilla should ask for *perdón* since they were "equally guilty."⁴² In both *Prensa Libre*'s editorial and in Sandoval's piece, far from being statements in support of wholesale forgetting, the authors were proposing what Jelin and others describe not as forgetting, but as the remembering of a different truth. The authors of both pieces, however, framed their arguments

³⁷ Juan Carlos Ruiz C. "Un perdón polémico," *Prensa Libre*, 10 December 1998.

³⁸ Francisco Martínez and Danilo Valladares, "Presidente reitera llamado al perdón," *Prensa Libre*, 15 December 1998.

³⁹ Juan Carlos Llorca, "Propuesta de Arzú cosecha críticas," *El Periódico*, 10 December 1998.

⁴⁰ Julia Corado, "El perdón más controversial," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 27 December 1998; Carlos Bendfeldt, "El perdón de la discordia," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 29 December 1998.

⁴¹ Editorial, "Pedir perdón, gran paso adelante," *Prensa Libre*, 11 December 1998.

⁴² Mario Antonio Sandoval, "Perdón, olvido y conocimiento," *Prensa Libre*, 11 December 1998.

within the context of memory versus forgetting and saw the value of at least some forgetting. Sandoval, especially, prescribed forgetting as a way to achieve reconciliation.

Not all of Guatemala's conservative commentators were so bold as to openly describe the remembering of different truths as forgetting. Conservative, pro-military commentator Karin Escaler's view of the "truth" of the conflict was clear when, in reaction to Arzú's announcement, she asked, much as Sandoval had, if the guerrilla were also going to ask for *perdón*. She wrote that it was completely cynical of Arzú to ask "widows and orphans, people who saw their property destroyed and their pockets plundered, to forget."⁴³

Escaler's understanding of *perdón* as forgetting finds an echo in many other commentaries written in the weeks before the second anniversary of the Peace. Human rights activists and more left-leaning individuals, surprisingly, agreed with this aspect of Escaler's commentary, though their idea of what Arzú wanted forgotten, as well as their idea of the "truth" of the conflict, are certainly quite different than hers. The leaders of both the Central General de Trabajadores de Guatemala (CGTG, Confederation of Workers of Guatemala) and the Alianza contra la Impunidad (ACI, Alliance against Impunity) asserted that Arzú's act of "political hypocrisy" was little more than an effort to "wipe the slate clean."⁴⁴ Journalist and feminist Laura E. Asturias agreed in her piece, "Wiping the slate clean." She described Arzú as attempting to "promote a sort of *perdón and forgetting*." What was needed for true reconciliation was that the perpetrators be punished and the victims compensated; "anything else is an insult."⁴⁵ Helen Mack concurred. Guatemalans did not, she said, know the truth of what had happened, and so, though she saw Arzú's announcement as a step forward, she also believed that it was not the right moment. She added that she hoped that "when the Truth Commission delivers its final document, the parties that were involved in the conflict truly ask Guatemalans for *perdón* so that what happened never happens again." She also offered her thoughts on the fact that Arzú intended to ask forgiveness for "excesses" and declared that what had happened in the conflict was more than excesses; instead, it was a well thought out campaign to violate human rights.⁴⁶ Asturias and Mack both understood that asking for *perdón* first required knowledge about the past, knowledge

⁴³ Putting her conservatism on full display, she also believed that the Church should ask *perdón* for not doing enough to support the government in their fight against the guerrilla. (Karin Escaler, "¿Y van a pedir perdón la guerrilla y la Iglesia?," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 16 December 1998.)

⁴⁴ "No pedirán perdón," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 21 December 1998.

⁴⁵ Laura E Asturias, "Borrón y cuenta nueva," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 19 December 1998. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁶ Julia Corado, "Jornada conmemorativa: El perdón más controversial," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 27 December 1998.

of what exactly Arzú was asking *perdón* for, and Mack, at least, hoped the "truth commission" report would contribute to this.

Mack's mention of the CEH report is significant. Many activists believed that the timing of Arzú's *perdón* was dedicated solely to promoting a pre-emptive forgetting of what the CEH was rumored to have concluded: that state security institutions had been responsible for the vast majority of the violations committed during the conflict. Mack, to be sure, did not state this explicitly, nor did Jesuit Juan Hernández Pico when he wrote, "it was not the same to ask for *perdón* before knowing the [contents of the] disturbing CEH report."⁴⁷ Miguel Ángel Sandoval and Mario Monteforte Toledo, however, were more clear. Sandoval, who had signed a number of the Peace Accords on the URNG's behalf and would go on to be their presidential candidate in 2007, wrote in "*Perdón...and a clean slate*" that it seemed to him that Arzú was trying to "kill two birds with one stone: one, to stay ahead of the CEH report and its possible recommendations and, two, to give Guatemalans a reason to 'celebrate' this 29 December" when, in reality, there was nothing to celebrate.⁴⁸ Monteforte Toledo, an author and member of both the Juan José Arévalo and Jacobo Arbenz governments, believed that Arzú had decided to ask for *perdón* shortly before the CEH report was published with the hope of "minimiz[ing] the contents of this fundamental work and mak[ing] the perpetrators of genocide vanish,"⁴⁹ thereby condemning them to oblivion. Interestingly, the Secretary of the Peace, Raquel Zelaya, waded into the discussion and, evidence of the strength of the discursive framework, used the same language to assure Guatemalans that the government was not seeking to "wipe the slate clean." The *perdón*, she added, did not eliminate the victims' "right to truth, justice, and compensation," which were guaranteed in the Peace Accords.⁵⁰ Commentators' beliefs that the *perdón* was motivated by a wish to forget was

⁴⁷ Juan Hernández Pico, *Terminar la Guerra, Traicionar la Paz: Guatemala en las Dos Presidencias de la Paz, Arzú y Portillo (1996-2004)* (Guatemala City: FLACSO, 2005), 170.

⁴⁸ Miguel Ángel Sandoval, "¿Perdón... y cuenta nueva?," *El Periódico*, 19 December 1998.

⁴⁹ Mario Monteforte Toledo, "Hay perdones imperdonables," *El Periódico*, 19 December 1998. Years later, Claudia Samayoa also suggested as much in the 2009 Impunity Watch/Convergencia por la Verdad publication, *La Persistencia de la Verdad*. She wrote that, "presumably," Arzú asked for *perdón* because of the "rumors that the CEH report was going to be more forceful than expected, given that it would include genocide and State terrorism"; Claudia Virginia Samayoa, "Evaluación del cumplimiento de las recomendaciones de la Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico," in *La Persistencia de la Verdad: A diez Años del Informe de la CEH*, eds. Impunity Watch y Convergencia por los Derechos Humanos (Guatemala: Editorial Serviprensa, 2009), 49.

⁵⁰ Francisco Martínez, "Justicia y verdad," *Prensa Libre*, 21 December 1998. And in fact, the CEH found Arzú's *perdón* lacking. "Taking into account [Arzú's] request for *perdón*," *Memoria del Silencio* nevertheless recommended that the state, and the guerrilla, ask for *perdón*; Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, *Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio*, Volume 5, *Conclusiones y Recomendaciones* (Guatemala City: Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, 1999), 61.

supported by Arzú's actions when the CEH was published. In addition to refusing to walk on stage to accept the report, he declared it "one more investigation," and one whose findings were "arguable and provisional."⁵¹ His truth, it seems, was quite a different one.

With the *perdón*, and given its timing, activists and progressive commentators believed that Arzú hoped to finally be able to declare an end to the conflict. It was his way of closing the book on the past, and then putting that book back on the shelf to gather dust. They believed that his request for *perdón*, combined with the Amnesty Law, sent a clear message: Arzú hoped that the crimes committed during the conflict and the military's "excesses" would be forgotten. This, perhaps, is why they insisted so loudly and frequently that state security institutions, as the CEH would soon conclude, had committed 93% of the human rights violations. They saw the *perdón* as a political move, a move Arzú made to reduce the impact the CEH's findings were sure to have, to promote forgetting by disguising it behind a façade of memory. On the surface, asking for forgiveness, does require remembering, remembering that someone did something that was wrong; in this it is quite like applying for amnesty. But, as activists noticed, by calling for reconciliation before the CEH's clarified history had been made public and imagining that a well-planned and extremely violent counterinsurgency was simply "excesses," Arzú was attempting to dictate what was remembered and what was forgotten. Describing what the CEH would conclude were acts of genocide as "excesses" was Arzú's attempt to forget institutional responsibility and re-imagine human rights violations as the result of individual soldiers or patrollers' decision to rape, torture, massacre, and destroy communities.

But of course individuals *had* committed human rights violations. Though the CEH, prohibited from naming names, would find state institutions responsible as institutions, individuals had wielded machetes with deadly effect and tossed infants down wells. Many members of human rights organizations and their allies, therefore, insisted that *perdón* was

⁵¹ Hernández Pico, *Terminar la Guerra, Traicionar la Paz*, 169. Discussions of official forgetting in December 1998 were not limited to Arzú's *perdón*, though certainly these other discussions lent weight to the idea that the *perdón* was not sincere and that Arzú really sought to forget. On 11 December, *Prensa Libre* reported that Congress "forgot" the posthumous tribute to Gerardi which had been agreed on in Acuerdo Legislativo 21-98, passed 28 April of the same year. While Luis Mijangos, of the ultra-conservative Frente Republicano Guatemalteco (FRG, Guatemalan Republican Front), stated that this forgetting was simply another example of the "government's general policy of downplaying that importance of the crime," the FDNG's Nineth Montenegro argued that it suggested that the government was not really interested in true forgiveness. Given that the tribute had been forgotten, she described Arzú's actions as "demagogic." The newspaper's editorial for the next day declared that "it cannot be forgotten that, in light of the behavior of groups and people related to the official party, a forgetting of this nature can easily be considered as a premeditated action, stemming from a superior order." ("Una nueva duda en el caso Gerardi," *Prensa Libre*, 11 December 1998.)

impossible without knowing what had happened and who was responsible. Political cartoonist Filóchofo asked Arzú to "tell us who" to *perdonar*.⁵² Human rights activist Miguel Ángel Albizures wrote passionately on the issue. He was critical of the *perdón* and demanded that the names of the perpetrators be known, for how else can one *perdonar*? He wrote that, "More than asking for *perdón* for crimes [that "the current president of the Republic, the Minister of Defense, the Interior Minister and the Director of the Police"] did not commit, they should foster justice and, just as they [the church] have put the names of thousands of victims on pillars in



"If the *perdón* is not going to be demagogic...It is necessary to compensate the victims and know the names of the perpetrators, so that their crimes are never repeated. "

Arzú (wearing the conquistador's hat): "We have to *perdonar*! "

Response: "Yea!...But tell us who..."

Siglo Veintiuno. 29 December 1998.

front of the Cathedral, there should be a place where the people can read the names of the perpetrators, so that they never forget their executioners."⁵³ Though the more conservative Mario Antonio Sandoval was against naming because "a country like Guatemala should be sure to reduce its problems, not add to them," historian Nery Villatoro Robledo agreed with Albizures in "*Perdonar* is not to forget." He wrote that he supported Arzú's move and that it showed some

⁵² José Manuel Chacon, "*Siglo Veintiuno*, 29 December 1998.

⁵³ Miguel Ángel Albizures, "¿Quiénes llenarán la plaza el 29?," *El Periódico*, 16 December 1998.

courage on his part to "ask *perdón* for the crimes and atrocities which others ordered and committed." But, he added, these "others" must also ask for *perdón*, for, to *perdonar*, the question of "who?" must be answered. And this, he continued, "brings us inevitably to the theme of justice." Without justice, "asking for *perdón* only has the meaning of *wiping the slate clean*, of forgiving and forgetting," all of which would make reconciliation, which was the aim of Arzú's *perdón*, quite difficult. And, he added, in a statement that fits perfectly within the larger discursive framework of post-Peace Guatemala where memory prevents repetition, "forgetting our history is to invite a new tragedy."⁵⁴

At the ceremony celebrating the anniversary of the Peace, Arzú did ask for forgiveness in the name of the state as planned. He asked forgiveness for the violence which Guatemalans suffered "as a result of the decisions of political power and the actions of the army and of the security forces of the time."⁵⁵ The army also asked forgiveness, and declared that it was not a forgiveness that sought to silence the truth. On the contrary, as Erick Campos reported in *Prensa Libre*, Minister of Defense Héctor Barrios Celada insisted that "the clear, transparent truth must emerge, not a malicious one, and much less a partial one."⁵⁶ (With the publication of the CEH report, *Memoria del Silencio*, however, Barrios Celada would surely feel that the truth he had so lauded had been betrayed.)

The close relationship between *perdón* and forgetting, the way that many believed that *perdón* was simply a different way to promote forgetting, can also be seen in other moments not related to official requests for *perdón*. This is clear in the words of Wendy Santizo Méndez, a member of Hijos e Hijas por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio (HIJOS, Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice against Forgetting and Silence), who was interviewed by the Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHA, Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of Guatemala) for their publication about the ten years that had passed since the presentation of *Nunca Más*. Santizo Méndez described the state's request for *perdón* as "a joke, a farce," and recalled that the HIJOS' slogan is "Neither forgetting, nor *perdón*."⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Nery Villator Robledo, "Perdonar no es olvidar," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 12 December 1998. Emphasis in original.

⁵⁵ Juan Carlos Llorca, "Un perdón a medias....," *El Periódico*, 30 December 1998; "Los discursos del perdón (extractos)," *El Periódico*, 30 December 1998.

⁵⁶ Erick Campos, "Pide perdón al pueblo," *Prensa Libre*, 30 December 1998.

⁵⁷ The original HIJOS is an Argentine organization. Their slogan is "no olvidamos, no perdonamos, no nos reconciliamos." As a member of HIJOS explained to Vincent Druliolle, "It's impossible [to reconcile], it's

The relationship between *perdón* and forgetting continues. On 15 April 2013, *El Periódico*'s Juan Luis Font wrote "*Perdón* and forgetting." The piece underscored the relationship between the two, and brought the discussion back to Ricoeur. Speaking of the genocide trial of Ríos Montt and Mauricio Rodríguez Sánchez, chief of military intelligence during the former's time as de facto head of state, Font wrote of a refusal on the part of Guatemalans who lived through the early 1980s to admit even a small amount of responsibility for supporting one side or the other in the conflict. It is worthwhile, he wrote, to read Nelson Mandela's autobiography, for he is "able to admit the consequences of his actions." He pointed out that those who somehow find a way to support the violations of the 1980s also point to Mandela as an example to follow, though in their case he is an "example of *perdón* and forgetting." But, as Font pointed out, no one in South Africa forgot. Speaking of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's "truth for amnesty" deal, he wrote, "there was *perdón*, but only after a recognition of the crime committed by one's own hand." In a rather optimistic understanding of the process and its results, he added that "only then was [the perpetrator] freed from responsibility. Only then was it possible to look ahead and leave behind what was suffered." In Guatemala, however, the perpetrators have not admitted responsibility,⁵⁸ thereby preventing *perdón*.

Reconciliation as forgetting

Closely related to amnesty and *perdón*, and so also to forgetting, is reconciliation. The relationship between reconciliation and forgetting was clear from the first days of the post-Peace era when journalists and commentators relabeled the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional the Ley de Amnestía, thereby associating reconciliation with amnesia/forgetting. Whenever more conservative actors called for or spoke of reconciliation, the human rights community would once again spring into action, denouncing attempts to "wipe the slate clear" or "turn the page on

impossible because... We think they have to reconcile themselves with history, with this country, with society. They have to say where [the disappeared] are, they have to say what they did, where our brothers and sisters are, don't they? They have to tell us the truth that we've come to ask for. So we are not those who have to reconcile, they are. They have to reconcile with society, they have to really account for what. . . They won't do it, that's the problem. So no reconciliation is possible. They won't do it"; Vincent Druliolle, "H.I.J.O.S. and the Spectacular Denunciation of Impunity: The Struggle for Memory, Truth, and Justice and the (Re-)Construction of Democracy in Argentina," *Journal of Human Rights* 12, no. 2 (2013): 272.

⁵⁸ Juan Luis Font, "Perdón y olvido," *El Periódico*, 15 April 2013, <http://www.elperiodico.com.gt/es/20130415/opinion/226926/>.

the past." Those whose words had sparked the denunciations could only deny that they had hoped for forgetting when they called for reconciliation, often insisting more loudly that Guatemala must remember so that the past would not be repeated. In this back and forth between activists and conservative actors, in the accusations and denials, the construction of post-Peace Guatemala's discursive framework is very clear; it is a discursive framework that demands memory and loudly condemns those conservative sectors, often with ties to the military, that seek to promote forgetting from behind the discursive protection of words. Yet much depends on who is speaking. When, days before he was assassinated, Gerardi declared, "We are called to reconciliation. Christ's mission is one of reconciliation. His presence calls us to be agents of reconciliation in this broken society and to try to place the victims and perpetrators within the framework of justice"⁵⁹ no one believed that he was secretly hoping Guatemalans would forget. Yet when Arzú called for *perdón* and reconciliation, when a conservative Congress passed the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional, progressive sectors and the human rights community were unwavering in their belief that forgetting hid behind this talk of reconciliation. Historian Arturo Taracena Arriola, for example, wrote in 2007 that, "under the slogan of 'reconciliation,' official memory in Guatemala advocates forgetting [and] stimulates silence" as an effort to avoid fulfilling the CEH's recommendations and as a way to maintain impunity. There was little hope for the creation of democracy "when consecutive governments call for a 'reconciliation' they understand as forgetting."⁶⁰ In discussions about reconciliation and in denials about it, it is perhaps most clear that, for post-Peace Guatemala, the speaker, as much as the words spoken, determine meaning.

While commentators and activists loudly denounced amnesty and *perdón* as simply being official attempts to discourage memory, discussions of reconciliation and its connection to forgetting were often quieter. The strength of the association between reconciliation and forgetting can be seen most clearly in the insistence of members of human rights organizations that reconciliation did not, in fact, mean forgetting. In these statements, they were recuperating Gerardi's belief, and one echoed by the CEH, that reconciliation was not based on forgetting, but

⁵⁹ Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHA), *Guatemala: Never Again!* (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), xxiii.

⁶⁰ Arturo Taracena Arriola, "Historia, Memoria, Olvido, Conflicto Armado y Violaciones de los Derechos Humanos. Los Avatares de la Comisión de Esclarecimiento Histórico de Guatemala," in *Entre Historias y Memorias: Los Desafíos Metodológicos del Legado Reciente de América Latina*, ed. Maria Rosaria Stabili (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2007), 109.

on justice.⁶¹ Activist Frank La Rue, for example, declared shortly after the CEH report was published that "It is the time for reconciliation, but this does not imply forgetting, which constitutes a danger for the future of a country."⁶² The Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia (Multi-institutional Initiative for Peace and Harmony) explained that, if there was to be any hope for reconciliation, all Guatemalans must "know and make known to others the causes, development, and consequences of the Internal Armed Conflict."⁶³ They expanded on this in *El Libro Azul*, which guided the basic principles of how the government's Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento (PNR, National Reparations Program) would operate. Reconciliation, the Instancia insisted, was only possible if it was rooted in a "knowledge of the past, access to justice, the reconstruction of the social fabric, and the improvement of the socioeconomic conditions of the sector who was most effected" by the conflict.⁶⁴ This understanding of reconciliation mirrored that of the CEH in many ways, and the Instancia acknowledged that their use of the term drew on the CEH's, which declared, "truth would lead to reconciliation and, furthermore, that coming to terms with the truth is the only way to achieve this objective."⁶⁵ CEH commissioner, Alfredo Balsells Tojo, in *Olvido o Memoria: El Dilema de la Sociedad Guatemalteca*, perhaps unsurprisingly, repeated much of this understanding of reconciliation when he wrote that, "the truth might be painful for many people, but....it is necessary because, without it, it is not possible to talk of justice, a step necessary to arrive at the much-desired national reconciliation."⁶⁶

⁶¹ The CEH staff declared, for example, that "truth, justice, reparation and forgiveness are the bases of the process of consolidation of peace and national reconciliation," that "collective reparatory measures should be implemented in such a way as to facilitate reconciliation between victims and perpetrators, without stigmatizing either," that "exhumation...is in itself an act of justice and reparation and is an important step on the path to reconciliation," and that "to achieve national harmony and reconciliation, a concerted effort at cultural change is required." (CEH, *Conclusiones y Recomendaciones*, 62-3 and 67-8)

⁶² Rodolfo A. Flores García, "¿Y ahora, qué hacer con el informe de la CEH?," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 28 February 1999.

⁶³ Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia, *Cumplimiento de la Recomendación Número 36 de la CEH: Propuesta para la Reforma Educativa (Educación Secundaria)* (Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia, 2009), 4.

⁶⁴ Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia, *El Libro Azul: Política Pública de Resarcimiento*, (Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia, 2003), 5.

⁶⁵ Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, *Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio*, Volume 1, *Causas y Orígenes del Enfrentamiento Armado Interno* (Guatemala City: Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, 1999), 16. The CEH commissioners did recognize, however, that "no one today can be sure that the enormous challenge of reconciliation, through knowledge of the truth, can be successfully faced."

⁶⁶ Edgar Alfredo Balsells Tojo, *Olvido o Memoria: El Dilema de la Sociedad Guatemalteca* (F&G Editores: Guatemala City, 2001), 16.

Jesuit Juan Hernández Pico agreed, writing that "refusing to forget history and recuperating it with humanity, with lucidity and, moreover, with dedication, implies fully embarking on the path to reconciliation."⁶⁷ Margarita Carrera and Helen Mack concurred. Carrera, a regular contributor to *Prensa Libre* who also authored a book about Gerardi, wrote in 2005 that, "Reconciliation is impossible if the past is forgotten, if the truth and the search for justice are not known, and if war criminals and their victims continue living together, the former protected by impunity and the latter drowning in helplessness."⁶⁸ For Mack, truth and justice were the bases of reconciliation. They were, in fact, the "indispensable preconditions" for it.⁶⁹ As well, the 2009 Sepaz study about "reconciliation policies in Guatemala" between 1996 and 2008 also echoed this rejection of reconciliation as tied to forgetting. In his contribution to the work, Argentine social scientist Marcelo Colussi felt compelled to affirm "reconciliation is not forgetting, it is not wiping the slate clean with a call to drop past hatreds." Those who used reconciliation, he said, as a way to promote forgetting did not understand the term. A more accurate understanding of reconciliation, Colussi argued, involved an "attempt to recuperate historical memory so as to not forget what happened in the internal armed conflict." It involved "seeking justice and compensation for the damages which were suffered."⁷⁰ When human rights activists or other members of more progressive groups speak of it, reconciliation rejects forgetting because, as was repeated time and time again, it requires memory.

For the human rights community, reconciliation, which was often left undefined, was based on memory, truth, and justice.⁷¹ When they spoke of the need for reconciliation, they were very clearly not using it to mask a desire for forgetting. They repeated demands for memory, truth, justice, and reconciliation over and over as the Peace, and the hope which accompanied the signing of the Peace, receded into the past. And they felt compelled to do so because they believed that conservative sectors and those with ties to the military were masking forgetting with talk of reconciliation, trying to hijack the word and turn it into something else. When

⁶⁷ Hernández Pico, *Terminar la Guerra, Traicionar la Paz*, 91 and 115.

⁶⁸ Margarita Carrera, "Memoria histórica," *Prensa Libre*, 19 August 2005.

⁶⁹ Helen Mack, "Condiciones Esenciales para Promover la Justicia y la Reconciliación," in *Verdad y Justicia: Discursos y Ponencias Escogidos*, ed. Helen Mack (Guatemala City: Fundación Myrna Mack, 2007), 133 and 136.

⁷⁰ Marcelo Colussi, "El Rol del Estado en el Proceso de Reconciliación de Guatemala 1996-2008," in *Entre Pasado y Olvido: Políticas de Reconciliación en Guatemala, 1996-2008*, ed. Secretaría de la Paz (Guatemala City: Secretaría de la Paz, Guatemala, 2009), 108 and 111.

⁷¹ It is also, of course, based on structural reforms to reduce or eliminate injustice and inequality, but again, this project focuses on memory and forgetting.

conservative actors and government officials spoke of reconciliation, the human rights community understood that they were really promoting forgetting. This was, in part, because these officials also spoke in support of amnesty and *perdón*, both of which are clearly tied to forgetting, to not knowing, to not remembering past violations. Both are also related very closely to the denial of justice, which activists so clearly saw as a necessary requirement for reconciliation. These individuals and groups viewed the official understanding about reconciliation as not based on memory and justice, but rather on forgetting.

(Re?)Conciliation

There are fundamental problems with calls for reconciliation in Guatemala, and they lie partly in the difference between conciliation and reconciliation. The idea of reconciliation re-writes 500 years of Guatemalan history. Instead of being a history of genocide after genocide, as José Roberto Morales Sic and others discussed at a 2004 conference on racism and genocide,⁷² Guatemalan history becomes dominated by "friendships," as the Real Academia Española describes *reconciliar*. Reconciliation suggests that there was something in the past, some element of past social relations, which had, unfortunately, broken but which was worth being rescued. It sanitizes centuries of social and political conflict by re-naming it "friendship."

A quick glance at Guatemalan history reveals that this is not the case. As the CEH concluded, the causes of the conflict can be traced back at least to independence in 1821, when a racist, hierarchical, and exclusionary state was installed which used violence against the poor and indigenous to maintain power.⁷³ This is, perhaps, the long history many hope will be forgotten when they talk of an admittedly ill-defined reconciliation. Forgetting Guatemala's history of inequality, exploitation, and dispossession certainly re-imagines Guatemalan history and paints it in a far more positive light. Imagining Guatemalan social relations in this way, re-writing the historical narrative, also makes fixing post-Peace Guatemala's problems far more manageable. Instead of having to construct friendly social relations from nothing, all that must be done is to go back to 1959, before the internal armed conflict officially started, find the seed of friendship, and plant it again in 1997 (or in 2015).

⁷² Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos, *Genocidio, la Máxima Expresión del Racismo: Primer Encuentro en Guatemala sobre Racismo y Genocidio* (Guatemala: Industria Litográfica Maga, 2004), 47; Marcelo Colussi, "El Rol del Estado en el Proceso de Reconciliación de Guatemala 1996-2008," 103.

⁷³ CEH, *Causas y Orígenes del Enfrentamiento Armado Interno*, 82-3.

Yet if Guatemala is described as simply needing to be reconciled, and not "conciled," if history is re-written to erase centuries of exclusion and inequality, then the reasons the guerrilla took up arms and the reasons labor, student, and peasant activists struggled for rights are also erased; their ideals and politics are eliminated. Rather than having fought for the radical transformation of a racist, violent, exploitative, and exclusive state, guerrillas and activists become the ones who destroyed the "friendship" which had (in this new version of Guatemalan history) previously existed and which had to be recreated in the post-Peace era. Guerrillas and activists are transformed, as during the conflict, into common criminals who seek only profit or vengeance. To speak of conciliation, on the other hand, acknowledges the long-term causes of the conflict. Conciliation recognizes that activists and guerrillas were motivated by something other than greed. Conciliation recognizes that the causes of the conflict and the reasons to organize still exist.

Reconciliation forgets why Guatemalans fought for a better life. It forgets a long history of activism and resistance, in both rural and urban areas. It forgets the possibility that a better life exists and seeks to turn Guatemalans into passive beings who accept racism, exclusion, and a highly unequal distribution of land and wealth.

Alfredo Balesells Tojo described the Amnesty Law as an attempt to "throw the veil of forgetting over the Guatemalan nightmare" by hiding history, by "absolv[ing] the torturers, the massacrers, the executioners of extrajudicial deaths, the members of death squads, the offenders of humanity's most basic norms, of guilt." The amnesty, he continued, sought to prevent future generations from knowing "what happened inside police dungeons and military barracks to thousands of their compatriots who were not part of the warring factions."⁷⁴ Doctor and author José Barnoya also spoke to the issue of amnesia in "Ungrateful memory." "[S]ome officials," he wrote, claimed to suffer from Alzheimers. Yet, he added, "It is inexplicable that there is someone who denies remembering that he completely destroyed a village; that another recasts the massacre of a noble tribe as forgetting, or that he...disregards the thousands of voices which he silenced forever." Barnoya rejected officials' claims to have forgotten. Drawing on Jorge Luis Borges' belief that "'our past is our memory,'" he declared, "of all the faculties that man

⁷⁴ Alfredo Balesells Tojo, "¿Cuál guerra sucia?" *El Periódico*, 30 January 1997.

possesses, memory is the last which is lost." No matter what disease you are suffering from, no matter how serious it is,

memory always surpasses forgetting...it accompanies us to the last of our days. The shadow of the past is always present in the light of the future. All of us, absolutely all of us, atheists and believers, civilians and soldiers, the intelligent ones and the others, we all have something awful to tell, some abominable act to relate. Barbarities, cruelties, atrocities always float up from the depths of memory. ...

Recollections survive death, and the memories live on in the embers of the ashes. Memory is everlasting, immortal, indelible, as ungrateful as it may be...it remains there forever and ever, though many attempt to erase it, eradicate, it or banish it.⁷⁵

Despite Barnoya's assertions about the permanence of memory, other commentators suggested that Guatemalans in general, and not only the perpetrators, were "given to forgetting."⁷⁶ Journalist Marcela Gereda pointed to the continued dominance of a generalized forgetting in 2010. She wrote that, "if something characterizes this era [an era where 'the country is drowning, and us with it' because of the high number of *femicidios*, the increase in poverty, the assassination of bus drivers, and the social cleansing, because violence has become a way of being among youth], it is forgetting, indifference, the little or non-existent interest in the history of what has happened to us to make us as we are."⁷⁷ Forgetting and a lack of knowledge of history condemned Guatemala to have to endure the violence of the Peace and to be forced to survive the same conditions which had sparked the conflict and which the Peace Accords were supposed to have transformed.

If Guatemalans are a people prone to forgetting, as Gereda declared, have conservative sectors been successful? Has their support for forgetting, masked as reconciliation, amnesty, and *perdón*, somehow convinced Guatemalans that Guatemala will only find true peace without memory? Given debates about genocide sparked by the 2013 genocide trial and discussions about the trial itself, given continued commemorations on the anniversaries of local massacres, given HIJOS' and others' very public, very visible reminders about the past, splashed across

⁷⁵ José Barnoya, "La ingrata memoria," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 30 January 2002. Barnoya did not provide names of the officials to whom he was referring, but Romeo Lucas García was likely one of them. The injustice of Lucas García developing Alzheimers and losing his memory while his victims were unable to forget, as they repeated to both the CEH and Remhi, is clear.

⁷⁶ "De una cosa estoy seguro, sea quien sea el nuevo presidente: habrá nuevas penas y más olvidos," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 19 September 1999.

⁷⁷ Marcela Gereda, "¿Inermes o dormidos?," *El Periódico*, 17 May 2010, <http://www.elperiodico.com.gt/es/20100517/opinion/151627/>.

Guatemala's walls, the answer is certainly not simple. Clearly there is a direct relationship about what Guatemalans believe about memory and forgetting and what their ideologies and biographies are. Group membership determines Guatemalans' views on whether the past should be remembered or not, and on which past is truth.

While Gereda argued that forgetting characterizes the post-Peace era, it is a forgetting which disguises itself as amnesty, *perdón*, and reconciliation. These masks create a discursive environment which encourages memory and highlights its necessity on the surface, but which also strongly discourages it. Those who shroud the conflict in amnesty, *perdón*, and reconciliation hope that what is forgotten is state security institutions' responsibility for violations. But more than this, the hope exists that the violations themselves and, by extension, the conflict, will also be forgotten, that they will be lost to oblivion and never emerge to threaten the perpetrators with prosecutions or be used to promote fundamental changes to Guatemala's highly inequitable social, economic, and political structures. Human rights and victims' activists and more progressive commentators reject forgetting. They continue to advocate for memory, justice, and profound institutional and social transformations. Their incessant insistence that the conflict be remembered and their public unmasking of the forces of forgetting serve as a bulwark against officialdom's attempts to dictate forgetting by passing a law which dictates amnesia and by asking for *perdón*, disguising forgetting as reconciliation in a country where "conciliation" never existed.

Chapter Three

Guatemala: *Nunca Más*

Y otra vez la llama del recuerdo
vuelve a encenderme la memoria...
[...]
Que su memoria se mantenga encendida
y que la llama del recuerdo
no se apague nunca....

No más sangre,
no más dolor,
nunca más....
--Humberto Ak'abal¹

When conservative Guatemalans spoke of amnesty, *perdón*, and reconciliation, the human rights community understood these words to simply be masks for *olvido*, for forgetting. This was what conservatives left un-said in calls for amnesty, *perdón*, and reconciliation; it lay beneath their calls for memory.² Yet why did they hide their desire to forget? It cannot be denied that voices that openly call for the closing of Guatemala's memory box are heard from time to time, but these voices are few. Why do most feel the need to deny that they want to forget? Why not openly call for forgetting if that was what they feel will best contribute to reconciliation and non-repetition?

Demands for memory and denials of forgetting bring Steve Stern's emblematic memories and William Roseberry's discursive frameworks to mind. In his discussion of post-Pinochet Chile, Stern described these as frameworks which dictate which events will be included in a group's collective memory and which "kinds of memories are best forgotten or pushed back

¹ "And once again the flame of remembrance / returns to ignite memory.../ [...] / That your memory remains alight / and that the flame of memory / never goes out... / No more blood / no more pain / never again...." Humberto Ak'abal, "Dolor a Flor de Rostro," in *Rescatando Nuestra Historia: Represión, Refugio y Recuperación de las Poblaciones Desarraigadas por la Violencia en Guatemala*, eds. Jonathan "Jonás" Moller and Derrill Bazzy (Guatemala City: F&G Editores, 2009).

² "Beneath," however, is perhaps the wrong word to use, as is "un-said." Conservative politicians and commentators were loudly criticized when they promoted amnesty, *perdón*, or reconciliation. All that was left for conservative actors to do was to insist that they were not promoting forgetting when they supported the Amnesty Law, when they asked for *perdón*, or when they declared that what Guatemala needed was reconciliation.

toward the fringes,"³ while Roseberry's discursive frameworks "[set] out the central terms around which and in terms of which contestation and struggle can occur."⁴ The existence of a common discursive framework focused on memory as a guarantor of non-repetition, the dominance of an emblematic memory which insists on memory, is why president Álvaro Arzú insisted that, "We cannot forget, we should not forget"⁵ when, as seen in the previous chapter, it seemed that he actually did want to forget.

In post-Peace Guatemala, people demand memory (or historical memory or history or truth) to make the future better. These are understood as contributing to a poorly defined reconciliation. It is important, presidents and other public figures say, to remember, to know what happened in the past, so that it does not happen again, so that a new Guatemala emerges from the very literal ashes of the old. This is Guatemala's post-Peace discursive framework, one that centers around the idea of *nunca más*, never again. Yet this is not the state's preferred framework. The state, once again, is not monolithic. It is made up a range of institutions with different and sometimes competing agendas. The Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos (PDH, Human Rights Ombudsman's Office), for example, does not have the same interests, guiding principles, or discourse as the military, and neither is the same as the judiciary. As well, different parts of these institutions also disagree on these things. In the judiciary, for example, it is possible to identify different courts or judges who are more open than others to hearing cases from the conflict, and issuing a ruling in favor of the victims and their relatives.⁶ Nevertheless, it is still possible to identify something that can be described as "the state's discourse" based on state institutions' general tendencies. In this view, the PDH, for example, or former Attorney General Claudia Paz y Paz, are often outliers, the lone dissident voices among a range of state institutions which promote forgetting from behind a mask of memory.

³ Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 105-6.

⁴ William Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, eds. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 360-1.

⁵ Ramón Hernández and Emilio Godoy, "Arzú dice: misión cumplido y llama a un perdón sin olvido," *Prensa Libre*, 30 December 1996.

⁶ This became very clear during the 2013 genocide trial, which is discussed in Chapter Six. This is not to say that judges do not listen to evidence or that their rulings are solely based on their own opinions or politics. However, a more conservative trio of judges than the ones, led by Jazmín Barrios, who presided over the genocide trial would likely have given Ríos Montt's attorneys more leeway than Barrios gave them. Judges' tendency to rule one way or the other is also clear in the Corte Suprema de Justicia (CSJ, Supreme Court of Justice)'s review of the case. Of the five judges reviewing the case, based on previous rulings and the judges' written decisions, the conclusion of four of the five were already certain even before the case was reviewed.

What exists in Guatemala is a common discursive framework turned upside down. The discourse that insists on memory for a better future comes mainly from the demands and hopes of Guatemala's elite subalterns. It is not one that the state necessarily embraces willingly. After all, as Guatemalan political and social scientist Manolo Vela Castañeda writes, the state has never tried "to explain the war. Put simply, it was not a theme that was addressed. Unlike what happens in other countries that remember their wars, in Guatemala heroes are not exalted, battles are not remembered, important dates are not commemorated, not even monuments have been erected.... It is not possible to say that the state exploited the memory of the war in Guatemala." Instead, "The official history of the war is silence."⁷ Yet despite this official policy of silence, the state and its representatives do nevertheless speak from time to time. And when they do, it is within the framework of *nunca más*, the common discourse in Guatemala and around which discussions of the conflict take place.

Nunca más is the discourse of Guatemala's vibrant network of human rights and victims' organizations. *Nunca más* is the discourse of the progressive sectors of Guatemalan society, the same sectors against which the state directed its repression during the conflict. As with the state, these sectors and their larger interests sometimes collide. Some organizations and individuals are, for example, more economically, politically, or socially conservative than others, despite sharing an understanding of the work that memory does in the present and future. Members of Hijos e Hijas por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio (HIJOS, Sons and Daughters for Identity and Justice against Forgetting and Silence) and the student movement, for example, are often significantly more radical in their political and economic views than most other organizations, and are also very critical of the Church as an institution and members of the Church hierarchy. This is, of course, despite the work of the Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHA, Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of Guatemala) in investigating and documenting human rights abuses and at least ODHA's echoing of HIJOS' mantra: Neither forgetting, nor *perdón*. Despite the fractures and differences of opinion in the larger human rights community, it has promoted memory and understanding the violence of the conflict and demanded that the whereabouts of the disappeared be known since at least the 1980s, a time when the past so many declare must not be forgotten was the very real present.

⁷ Manolo Vela Castañeda, "Memorias de una batalla," unpublished manuscript, 23.

Human rights organizations and activists must constantly work to maintain the dominance, and common-ness, of their discursive framework. Sectors which promote forgetting, and which have done so from within the *nunca más* framework, have economic, political, and social power in Guatemala. They have an arsenal of (not only) discursive weapons at their disposal. Some of these discursive weapons were explored in the previous chapter. Yet it is important to point out that *nunca más* is not necessarily a Guatemalan creation. It is the discourse embraced internationally when truth and similar commissions are discussed, and it is the discourse many of these commissions, in Guatemala and elsewhere, use in their reports. The framework of *nunca más* limits the language used to talk about the past (in a manner not too distinct from the way that truth commissions themselves limit how people can talk about the past).

For the purposes of this chapter, following Foucault's discussion of discourse analysis which focuses not on "the half silent murmur of another discourse,"⁸ but on what statements are made, the words public figures utter and write will be taken at face value and explored as such. As a result, the memory/forgetting binary public figures use to talk about the past will not be interrogated in great depth. Stern, Jelin, and Megill's comments about struggles between memories, and so not between memory and forgetting, will be kept in mind, and their relevance will emerge from time to time, but the words people use will be of greater importance. As Foucault wrote, this chapter will not "give voice to the silence that surrounds [statements]," nor will it "rediscover[r] the unsaid whose place [a statement] occupies." Rather, it will "define a limited system of presences."⁹

Before continuing, it is important to repeat that there will be little discussion in this chapter about the absence of reform to address Guatemala's many deeply rooted inequalities, inequalities which pushed many to organize for change and/or take up arms to achieve their goals. The focus of this chapter, as with the dissertation, is on the work that memory is tasked with doing in post-Peace Guatemala. Few would say that Guatemala's numerous problems will all be solved by remembering the past. Yet it is also true that if memory is the starting point of a discussion about contemporary Guatemala, it becomes clear that its primary task is to reconcile

⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Routledge, 2002), 31.

⁹ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 134-5.

and prevent repetition. Memory is a tool; it will help build a reconciled Guatemala where the violations of the past are not repeated.

Remember so that *nunca más*

It is clear that *nunca más* is Guatemala's common discursive framework when the statements of conservative figures are taken into consideration. After all, the Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico (CEH, Historical Clarification Commission), Guatemala's official, United Nations-backed version of a truth commission, concluded that state security forces and their proxies were responsible for 93% of the human rights violations committed during the conflict. While some, though not all, post-Peace conservative figures have no direct ties to the perpetrators, they share, broadly speaking, a political project and ideology. Indeed, as mentioned in the introduction, some observers argue that, though conservative political parties appear and disappear, the "megaparty,"¹⁰ the right wing and pro-business Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras (CACIF, Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial, and Financial Associations), remains, operating behind the scenes to promote its interests and make sure that issues which its members do not want to be broached in the public sphere or in policy are ignored. One of these issues, as investigative journalist Martín Rodríguez Pellecer makes clear, is the business sector's involvement in (and responsibility for) genocide.¹¹ Since conservatives might be expected to support forgetting, their insistence on memory is relevant here.

A selected sample of statements shows that very little changed in the 15 years after the Peace Accords were signed. One of the more significant of the voices calling for remembering in the post-Peace era was then-president Arzú. As newspapers reported, on the day the final Peace Accords were signed, Arzú called on Guatemalans to *perdonar* one another in this "new chapter of history" that the nation was about to begin. *Perdón*, he stated, is the only "path which allows for the construction of a prosperous and democratic nation," a task which he acknowledged would be difficult to accomplish. Yet *perdón* did not mean forgetting "images of violence, since the widows, the orphans, and the wounded of the conflict will always carry these images of pain

¹⁰ Manolo Vela Castañeda, "El megapartido y sus perritos falderos," El Periódico, 6 July 2014, <http://elperiodico.com.gt/es/20140706/domingo/250343>.

¹¹ Martín Rodríguez Pellecer, "Los militares y la élite, la alianza que ganó la guerra," 21 August 2013, <http://www.plazapublica.com.gt/content/los-militares-y-la-elite-la-alianza-que-gano-la-guerra>.

with them."¹² In addition to rejecting forgetting, Arzú stated that, "It is one thing to *perdonar* in order to pursue a path of rebuilding our wounded society with positive and fraternal spirit, and it is something else to forget." Historical memory, he said, is essential for a people who wish for reconciliation; there must, he added, exist a "collective need to turn the page and overcome our recent unrest, but with the full awareness and knowledge of what happened to us, of what we were capable."¹³ Guatemala must not forget, Arzú explained, and only a "full awareness of what happened" would prevent repetition.¹⁴

The sentiment Arzú expressed in 1996 was repeated in former general and president Otto Pérez Molina's inaugural speech on 13 January 2012. Pérez Molina, who had been one of the military's representatives in the peace negotiations and is named as responsible for genocide by Guatemalan and international human rights organizations, was sworn in as Guatemala's president shortly after the 15th anniversary of the Peace. He stated, in a manner reminiscent of the rhetoric of 1996, "We should not forget the past but overcome it, to be able to collectively accept responsibility as a society, to be able to really *perdonar* ourselves, and to be able to look forward to construct a society and a culture of peace."¹⁵ A few weeks later, Pérez Molina held a press conference where he asserted, "we should not forget so that [the past] is not repeated"; "we should look," he added, "for a way to reconcile ourselves with each other."¹⁶

Leaving aside the idea that the human rights community "translated" *perdón* and reconciliation as forgetting (meaning that Pérez Molina was really saying that "we should not forget the past...but we should forget the past"), Arzú and Pérez Molina both loudly repeat the framework that demands memory as the best path for Guatemala to follow. They underscore the fact that the past must not be forgotten. They insist on it, explicitly rejecting forgetting and refusing to leave any room for others to question their commitment to memory. Arzú and Pérez Molina's statements against forgetting and in support of memory are clear evidence that a discursive framework focused on memory exists in post-Peace Guatemala, yet that conservatives speak of remembering in one breath and push for oblivion masked as *perdón* and reconciliation

¹² Ana Fresse, "Arzú exhorta al pueblo a perdonarse," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 30 December 1996.

¹³ Ramón Hernández and Emilio Godoy, "Arzú dice: misión cumplido y llama a un perdón sin olvido," *Prensa Libre*, 30 December 1996.

¹⁴ "Extracto del discurso de Alvaro Arzú," *El Periódico*, 30 December 1996.

¹⁵ Carolina Gamazo, "Pérez comienza 'la era del cambio,'" *El Periódico*, 15 January 2012; "Discurso de investidura de Otto Pérez Molina," *Plaza Pública*, 15 January 2012, <http://www.plazapublica.com.gt/content/discurso-de-investidura-de-otto-perez-molina>.

¹⁶ Daniela Castillo, "En Guatemala no hubo genocidio," *El Periódico*, 27 January 2012.

in the next clearly points to the fact that this framework is not their own. Rather, it has been imposed on them by the human rights community, as will be seen in greater depth below. Memory and *nunca más* are Roseberry's "languages of domination," which conservatives use and manipulate to promote their own ends.

Testimonial Truth

The reports of the Catholic Church's Proyecto Interdiocesano de Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (Remhi Project, Interdiocesan Project for the Recuperation of Historical Memory) and the CEH, and the discussion surrounding both, repeat Arzú's calls to remember. But, within this discursive framework, these discussions also reveal the struggle over "truth," over what to remember. As Vela Castañeda argued, ceasefires and decisions to lay down arms do not end wars. After the weapons have been silenced, the battle begins about the "clarification" of the violence committed during the conflict.¹⁷

Remhi's final report, *Nunca Más*, was published on 24 April 1998. The project's director, monseñor Gerardi, made the connection between recuperating historical memory and truth explicit. The Remhi project was fundamentally oriented toward "know[ing] the truth that will make us all free (Jn 8:32)," for, "if we orient ourselves according to the Word of God, we cannot hide or cover up reality. We cannot distort history, nor should we silence the truth." The Remhi Project collected the testimonies of the survivors of the conflict to find the truth which "has been twisted and silenced," "intentionally distorted in our country through thirty-six years of war against the people."¹⁸ Unsilencing the silenced, knowing the truth, would allow for peace,

a peace that is born from the truth that comes from each one of us and from all of us. It is a painful truth, full of memories of the country's deep and bloody wounds. It is a liberating and humanizing truth that makes it possible for all men and women to come to terms with themselves and their life stories. It is a truth which challenges each one of us to recognize our individual and collective responsibility and to commit ourselves to action so that those abominable acts never happen again.¹⁹

¹⁷ Manolo Vela Castañeda, "Las Pesadas Cargas del Pasado: la tradición de la violencia en Guatemala," in *El Lado Oscuro de la Eterna Primavera: Violencia, Criminalidad y Delincuencia en la Guatemala de Post-guerra*, eds. Manolo Vela Castañeda, Alexander Sequén-Móncez, and Hugo Antonio Solares (Guatemala City: FLACSO, 2001), 76.

¹⁸ Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHA), *Guatemala: Never Again!* (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), xxiv.

¹⁹ ODHA, *Guatemala: Never Again!*, xxv.

Recuperating and reclaiming historical memory, reconstructing history, discovering the truth—these are what the ODHA and the Church hoped *Nunca Más* would achieve. The collection of the survivors' testimonies, the writing of the report, and work in the communities related to the report were part of the recuperation of memory, the reconstruction of history, the discovery of truth. In this understanding, historical memory, history, and truth are different ways to say the same thing. None thrived during the conflict, when history was distorted and the truth silenced, and all were directed toward reweaving the social fabric and preventing a repetition of the past.

The refrain "never again" and the understanding that remembering was forward-looking were also repeated in the report itself. To prevent future violence, for example, the ODHA recommended the rewriting of "official history" to include the findings of Remhi and the CEH,²⁰ suggesting that the official history that existed at the time was, at the very least, problematic. Gerardi's words and Remhi's discourse shed some additional light on Jelin's argument that the opposition between memory and forgetting/silence is truly the opposition between different memories and narratives. Remhi was oriented toward helping the survivors find their voice, speak, and communicate their pain. The memories of Guatemala's survivors had been silenced by something; they had been silenced by fear, to be sure, but also by the state's own version of the past. With this understanding of a more active idea of silence and silencing, Jelin's comment that the struggle for memory is not against silence but against a competing memory becomes more relevant, as do Vela Castañeda and Megill's thoughts about historical narratives. Remhi's unsilencing of one past was intended to allow that past to be heard; this unsilencing would then silence, and delegitimize, the twisted history which had dominated during the conflict. Rather than the struggle for memory being one against silence, it might more usefully be described as one against silencing, where silencing does not leave silence—a lack of historical narrative—but replaces one narrative with another.

On 27 April, Guatemala awoke to the news that "the voice of the voiceless"²¹ had been silenced. Gerardi had been bludgeoned to death.²² With Gerardi's assassination, however, it

²⁰ ODHA, *Guatemala: Never Again!*, 315

²¹ Miguel Ángel Albizures, "Caso Gerardi: el móvil político aparece con más claridad," *El Periódico*, 28 April 2001.

²² For a thorough exploration of the Gerardi assassination, see Francisco Goldman's *The Art of Political Murder*. From the beginning, the Church and human rights community insisted that Gerardi's assassination was political and clearly tied to *Nunca Más*. Members of some state institution, therefore, were responsible. The government proposed a series of non-political motives and perpetrators until the evidence finally overwhelmed these versions. In the end, members of the Estado Mayor Presidencial (EMP, Presidential General Staff) were found

seemed that the forces of the past sought to return Guatemala to an era of fear and darkness,²³ a fear that, in Gerardi's words, had silenced Guatemalans and silenced truth.²⁴ Truth, historical memory, memory, history, and even reality blend into one another and emerge clearly in the testimonies Remhi collected. For human rights organizations, the testimonies are where truth, memory, and history reside, and it is only through knowledge of these things that a return to Guatemala's "dark night"²⁵ would be prevented.

The discourse surrounding the UN and government sponsored CEH initially focused more on history and truth and less on memory, but the same discursive framework of *nunca más* is evident nevertheless. Part of the similarity between the two is due to the fact that many of the same people, especially historians and foreign academics, were involved in both projects; as well, Remhi provided testimonies and other information to the CEH. Yet the CEH's *nunca más* framework, and the tying of history to truth, was evident in Guatemala even before Remhi published its report, and even before Arzú's speech celebrating the signing of the Peace Acords. It is clear in the Acuerdo sobre el establecimiento de la Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico de las violaciones a los derechos humanos y los hechos de violencia que han causado sufrimiento a la población guatemalteca (Agreement on the establishment of the Commission to clarify past human rights violations and acts of violence that have caused the Guatemalan population to suffer), signed 23 June 1994. The CEH was meant to clarify "the human rights violations and acts of violence that have caused the Guatemalan population to suffer." Yet clarified history is also truth, for "the people of Guatemala have a right to know the whole truth

guilty of the assassination. The priest who shared the parish house with Gerardi was also sentenced as an accomplice to the assassination.

²³ Remhi, "Comunicado del Equipo Interdiocesano de la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica de Guatemala," *Prensa Libre*, 4 May 1998. Remhi asserted that his assassination was clearly linked to his work of "reconstructing the memory of the people," and specifically to the presentation of *Nunca Más*. Now more than ever, they asserted, it was essential that *Nunca Más* be made known to the public to contribute to the process of social reconstruction and reconciliation.

²⁴ ODHA, *Guatemala: Never Again!*, xxv.

²⁵ Carolina Escobar Sarti, "Nuestra Memoria," *Prensa Libre*, 14 May 1998. The importance of memory, of truth, of knowing what happened in the past so that it would never happen again, and more generally so that the future would be better, is also clear in the words and work of others who commented on both Remhi and the CEH. See, for example, Maynor Amézquita, "Una memoria histórica sin acuerdo: Entrevista con Armando de la Torre y Frank la Rue," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 5 July 1998; Claudia Argueta, "Tomuschat no promete milagros para esclarecer los excesos de la guerra," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 2 August 1997; Julio F. Lara, "Justicia y reivindicación de los mártires de la guerra piden en Marcha de la Verdad," *Prensa Libre*, 2 August 1997.

concerning these events, clarification of which will help avoid a repetition of these sad and painful events and strengthen the process of democratization."²⁶

Though the CEH was oriented toward clarifying history and Remhi toward recuperating historical memory, both were seen as equivalent to knowing the truth and were essential if a repetition of the past was to be prevented. And those who worked with or supported both commissions hoped, and demanded, that the truths the reports contained would become the new official history, the new official historical narrative of Guatemala. Though the Accord was greatly criticized for having created a weak Commission, the simple statement that the truth must be known, and the implication that the then-dominant understanding of the conflict, an understanding imposed and promoted by state institutions and the media, was not true, was a powerful indictment of the state and its campaigns of disinformation.

The connection between truth and the history the CEH would clarify through the collection of testimonies was further solidified when, on various occasions, the CEH was called a Truth Commission in newspaper reports. For example, on 1 August 1997, *Prensa Libre*'s front page headline read, "Truth Commission begins work with 50,000 denunciations."²⁷ Arzú repeated the equation of historical clarification and truth the same month.²⁸ The wording of the February 1998 ad taken out by the former guerrillas, the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca, (URNG, Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity), is similar, though perhaps more significant was the URNG's acknowledgement that they had committed "errors and excesses...[and] injustices" in "concrete situations" during the conflict. The URNG was completely supportive of efforts to clarify what had happened during the conflict, to find out the

²⁶ Agreement on the Establishment of the Commission to Clarify Past Human Rights Violations and Acts of Violence that Have Caused the Population to Suffer. Signed 23 June 1994, <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/commissions/Guatemala-Charter.pdf>. "Human rights violations" were those acts committed by the state, while the "acts of violence" were those committed by the guerrilla. Both, however, were the "history" the CEH was charged with clarifying. Similar declarations about truth and history were repeated as the CEH began its work. In September 1997, for example, the CEH placed an ad in *Prensa Libre* where they affirmed, "It is time to tell the truth!" "Knowing our history," the ad continued, "we will be sure that it never happens again." (CEH, "Hay verdades que no se cuenta a cualquiera," *Prensa Libre*, 25 September 1997.)

²⁷ *Prensa Libre*, 1 August 1997. See also, for example, "Piden a Comisión de la Verdad investigar la muerte de Flaquer," *Prensa Libre*, 31 July 1997; Julio F. Lara, "Justicia y reivindicación de los mártires de la guerra piden en Marcha de la Verdad," *Prensa Libre*, 2 August 1997; Eduardo Antonio Velázquez Carrera, "Fin del tema; and "Las Comisiones de la Verdad," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 26 August 1997. Marielos Monzón opted to call both *Memoria del Silencio* and *Nunca Más* "truth reports." (Marielos Monzón, "Históricas sentencias," *Prensa Libre*, 15 December 2009.)

²⁸ Francisco Mauricio Martínez, "Tomuschat exhorta a víctimas a denunciar violaciones registradas durante la guerra," *Prensa Libre*, 1 August 1997.

truth of the events, and to contribute to reconciliation. They would supply the CEH with "documentation and testimony" so that "the Guatemalan people...are fully aware of the bloodiness of the armed confrontation...so that it never again happens."²⁹

The CEH's final report was published on 25 February 1999, in a ceremony which, as *Prensa Libre* reported, a "massive" number of people were expected to attend. Those present, the article read, would witness the moment when "the truth of what happened was made known."³⁰ A few weeks before this, historian and commentator Nery Villatoro Robledo had written that many had high expectations, but also doubts, about the contribution the CEH report would make to the construction of a peaceful and democratic nation. Villatoro Robledo recognized that this process of construction would require "a deep knowledge of the truth about the tragic history of this country so that it never, ever is repeated." The report must be a "contribution to an awareness of the historical truth"; only in this way would it further reconciliation and democracy. Yet, because of the perceived weakness of the CEH mandate, if the CEH revealed the truth of the past or facilitated any of these things, Villatoro Robledo declared that it would be "the miracle commission."³¹ Yet its report, *Memoria del Silencio*, surprised everyone, including Villatoro Robledo, with its strength. After the Report was published, after its conclusion that acts of genocide had been committed against select indigenous communities during specific years, after it named the military as institutionally responsible for gross human rights violations, Villatoro Robledo was quick to acknowledge that a miracle had indeed taken place.³²

Other opinion pieces and editorials echoed the idea that, with the publication of *Memoria del Silencio*, the (one and only) truth would be known, thereby preventing a repetition of past atrocities. Vice President of *Prensa Libre*, Mario Antonio Sandoval, for example, wrote an opinion piece titled "The truth hurts, but it also liberates" about the CEH and its truth.³³ The editorial in *Prensa Libre* two days after the report was presented repeated what Sandoval had said, arguing that the state should institute policies "so that the country and its inhabitants

²⁹ URNG, "Un compromiso con el escalrecimiento, la verdad y la reconciliación," *El Periódico*, 23 February 1998, paid ad. That said, however, they were quick to state that their tactics did not include "repression, torture, massacre, vengeance or injustice," which was, the ad implied, precisely the nature of their opponents' tactics. Reporting on the URNG's acknowledgement, *El Periódico* pointed out quite correctly that the URNG did not clarify what excesses they were talking about. ("La mea culpa de la URNG," *El Periódico*, 23 February 1998.)

³⁰ Julieta Sandoval and Miguel Acabal, "Esperan masiva audiencia," *Prensa Libre*, 25 February 1999.

³¹ Nery Villatoro Robledo, "El informe de la CEH," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 14 January 1999.

³² Nery Villatoro Robledo, "La CEH: una comisión del milagro," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 27 February 1999.

³³ Mario Antonio Sandoval, "La verdad duele, pero además libera," *Prensa Libre*, 26 February 1999.

accommodate ourselves to the pain of the truth of what happened." The government should, first and foremost, make "the true history of the internal armed confrontation" known. This, combined with the fulfillment of the CEH's recommendations, would make sure that "the past cannot ever be repeated."³⁴

The description of memory as truth, and the idea that the CEH contributed to both through its clarification of history, is most clear in *Forgetting or Memory: The Dilemma of Guatemalan Society*, the 2001 work by CEH commissioner, Alfredo Balsells Tojo. Oscar Clemente Marroquín, director of the Guatemalan newspaper, *La Hora*, set the tone in the prologue, affirming that an in-depth knowledge of the recent past was an "indispensable step toward assuming the truth, as painful as it is, and toward seriously committing ourselves to building peace."³⁵ Balsells Tojo mostly limited himself to summarizing the CEH's findings and recommendations, but he also discussed the battle for memory that existed in Guatemala, a battle against those who promoted forgetting. He wrote that while "the eternally weak" promote memory and seek "peace and harmony by way of an awareness of the truth and the application of justice," those who promote forgetting do so from "the highest circles of power" as "the best way to avoid justice," for they are implicated in the past violations which the CEH revealed. The wish of the powerful that the past be forgotten continues "the official policy of lies, impunity and a moral deterioration which smothers us."³⁶ He declared, "historical memory is the recent truth of Guatemala" and concluded that Guatemalans must "remember the terrible acts [of the past] to force ourselves to avoid a repetition of this horror."³⁷

Balsells Tojo added detail to the international discourse surrounding truth commissions where more memory leads to reconciliation by his insistence on justice, but he also repeated the dichotomy between memory and forgetting which Jelin highlighted as overly simplistic at the very least. At the same time, while he contrasts memory and forgetting, it is also clear that he

³⁴ "Algo más sobre el reporte de la CEH," *Prensa Libre*, 27 February 1999.

³⁵ Oscar Clemente Marroquín, "Prólogo," in *Olvido o Memoria: El Dilema de la Sociedad Guatemalteca*, Edgar Alfredo Balsells Tojo (F&G Editores: Guatemala City, 2001), xv-xvi.

³⁶ Edgar Alfredo Balsells Tojo, *Olvido o Memoria: El Dilema de la Sociedad Guatemalteca*, (F&G Editores: Guatemala City, 2001), 3-5.

³⁷ Balsells Tojo, *Olvido o Memoria*, 17 and 211. The Fundación Myrna Mack recognized both the limited impact of *Memoria del Silencio* and *Nunca Más* and their truth. They argued that "[t]urning our backs on [the truth contained in the CEH and Remhi reports] prevents us from learning from our history, mistakes, and weaknesses." They added that "It makes us tolerant and indifferent to highly violent and criminal situations like the ones we are currently living with." Fundación Myrna Mack, "De una Guerra a la Otra," (25 February 2009), 2.

sees forgetting as akin to lying. So, while he suggests that remembering and forgetting are opposites, he, too, understands that forgetting also involves remembering "lies," rather than the CEH's "truths." Whether the discursive opposition of memory and forgetting is false or not is, however, less important than the fact that it nevertheless forms part of the framework around which post-Peace discussions about the conflict are constructed. Balsells Tojo's work is also interesting in that he clearly defines the different groups that exist in Guatemala—the powerful and the eternally weak—and their different positions on memory. As Halbwachs wrote, different groups do have different memories. In Balsells Tojo's work, they also have different ideas about memory, and about whether the past ought to be remembered.

All of these statements and comments about truth affirm that "the truth" and "the history" of the conflict were unknown until the Remhi and, to a greater extent, the CEH reports were published. This suggests that only lies had been known, and also that the truth was based on victims' and survivors' testimonies. But truth and history are vague terms. In Arzú's comments that the truth of the conflict must be known to prevent a repetition of the past, "the truth" and "the past" could mean anything. There is little to suggest that his "truth" about "the past" was the same as Balsells Tojo's or Gerardi's "truth." It is entirely possible that Arzú was hoping that the "truth" the CEH revealed would in the end be the same truth/historical narrative as that which dominated during the conflict. Perhaps he was hoping that the CEH's clarified history of the conflict would turn out to be the same version the conservative media, military, and government had repeated for decades? After all, the CEH was charged with investigating both the guerrillas' and the military's violence. Truth and history are broad enough terms that those who might have different ideas about what the truth or the history of the conflict was can nevertheless use the words, promoting the search for both, thereby fitting in the discursive framework. Even if some hoped that the truth the reports would reveal would highlight the guerrilla's atrocities or indigenous communities' involvement in the guerrilla, the idea that the reports and their testimonies would reveal the truth of the conflict certainly represents a shift from previous decades when those who came forward to tell their stories about the military or paramilitary organizations' human rights violations were ignored. The idea that the reports would reveal "the truth" of the conflict, that they would clarify "the history" of the past is problematic and leaves little room for discussions about the past. It is, nevertheless, a significant shift in the value placed on the victims' and survivors stories.

Those who worked with or supported Remhi and the CEH spoke of the reports, and of the testimonies on which their conclusions were based, as memory, history, historical memory, and truth, equating the terms in the process. They asserted that knowing the truth of the testimonies would prevent history from repeating itself. The "testimonial truth," as explained in Remhi and the CEH, is that the military and its proxies, most significantly the Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PACs, Civil Self-defense Patrols), were responsible for 93% of the human rights violations. Yet this testimonial truth is, as some have pointed out, only a partial truth. As Tani Adams argued, this "relatively simplistic and dualistic" understanding of the CEH's conclusions about state responsibility is repeated over and over. While there is no doubt that this is "true," and certainly Adams is in no way denying state responsibility, she argued that the more simplistic understanding of the conflict "omits important complexities" about how the war was actually experienced.³⁸ There is more to the CEH than its conclusions about responsibility. She lists a few aspects of the CEH's findings that, if incorporated into the more generalized understanding or discussion of the conflict, would contribute to reconciliation. These include an understanding of the guerrilla's actions and how they, too, contributed to the destruction of social fabric and also left communities "vulnerable" to the army's reprisals. She also argues that acknowledging that there were more than two groups involved in the conflict, and particularly that economic sectors played a key role in the conflict, would contribute to a better understanding of it and of how to rebuild Guatemalan society.³⁹ She argues for a more inclusive, complete, or multifaceted truth.

Adams' discussion of the silences surrounding the CEH report recalls Stern's exploration of memory-making and the interconnected process of silence-making. Rather than memory-making involving the "flat denial of historical facts or truths," it more often entails the "use of some slices of history to cover up others."⁴⁰ For Adams, military responsibility for violations has

³⁸ Tani Marilena Adams, *Cumulative Impact Case Study: Consumed by Violence: Advances and Obstacles to Building Peace in Guatemala Fifteen Years After the Peace Accords* (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, April 2011), 21.

³⁹ Adams, *Consumed by Violence*, 22-3. As had the Remhi and CEH reports, Adams highlights the role of economic elites. "These groups," she writes, "were central in the evolution of the conflict, played a definitive role in the evolution of the peace accords, were critical in obtaining the rejection of the Referendum on the Accords in 1999, and continue to obstruct fiscal reform today, one of the major obstacles to the construction of a viable state." As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, economic and other types of structural reform, whose implementation would most definitely work to ensure non-repetition, will not be explored here, since the focus is on the work memory and forgetting are tasked with.

⁴⁰ Steve J. Stern, *Reckoning with Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1989-2006* (Durham, NC:

obscured the guerrilla's actions and inactions and the role of powerful economic sectors. This is one piece of history covering up another, a cover up that others also recognize, and condemn. In a Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales—Sede Guatemala (FLACSO, Latin America Social Sciences Institute—Guatemala Office) publication, Alexander Sequén-Mónchez, for example, highlighted the way that the guerrilla, too, militarized the countryside. In a footnote, he noted that it was virtually taboo to say that the guerrilla and the military were both responsible for violations. Making such a declaration, he wrote, "turns you into a *persona non grata*, which shows how far we are from reconciliation."⁴¹

Adams argues for a more complete understanding of the conflict and a more detailed remembering of the contents of the CEH report. Her comments about the simplified version which dominates in Guatemala, a version where portions of the report are forgotten or just not talked about, as Sequén-Mónchez confirmed, finds some parallels in the criticisms surrounding truth and historical commissions. In much the same way that the dominant discourse about the CEH relates to state responsibility and forgets that of the guerrilla and economic sectors, one of the key criticisms made of truth commissions is that they tend to limit the memories which are seen as valid; only those which fit into the commission's overall narrative framework are given a place in history. While commissions' reports usually rewrite the historical narrative to be more representative of how the majority experienced a particular historical era, they nevertheless limit the accepted "truths" of history. In Guatemala, culling dissident or undesirable memories seems to have happened (at least) twice: at Trouillot's moment of fact retrieval and at the moment of retrospective significance.

Testimonial Non-Truths

For activists and academics, the testimonies contained in both the CEH and Remhi reports are truth. But there is more than one truth in Guatemala, more than one memory, and many others reject the findings of Remhi and the CEH. Yet those who disagree with the numeric breakdown of responsibility do so in the same language as those who accept these findings, by declaring that it is important to remember, to know history, to know the truth. These are

Duke University Press, 2010), 268-9.

⁴¹ Alexander Sequén-Mónchez, "El Escenario Nefasto: una visión de la seguridad y la justicia" in *El Lado Oscuro de la Eterna Primavera: Violencia, Criminalidad y Delincuencia en la Guatemala de Post-guerra*, eds. Manolo Vela Castañeda, Alexander Sequén-Mónchez, and Hugo Antonio Solares (Guatemala City: FLACSO, 2001), 204.

Guatemala's more conservative sectors, often those with ties to the military or the paramilitary groups the reports named as responsible for gross human rights violations. These are the sectors Balsells Tojo described as promoting forgetting from "the highest circles of power" and as being implicated in violations. Yet these conservative, often military sectors, are not promoting forgetting per se; rather, they are promoting different truths and different memories, evidence that the opposite of memory is, as Jelin and others suggested, memory. They are promoting, in the end, a different historical narrative, a different telling of the recent past.

Shortly after *Nunca Más* was published, *Siglo Veintiuno* interviewed right-leaning academic Armando de la Torre. He declared that the processes underway that aimed to recover Guatemala's historical memory, including those undertaken by the CEH and Remhi, and another by the Asociación de Veteranos Militares de Guatemala (Avemilgua, Association of Military Veterans of Guatemala), would tell only one side of the story. What Guatemala really needed was a "scientific investigation" written "from the perspective the passage of time gives and with more complete information." De la Torre also argued that projects that sought to reclaim historical memory were "part of the ideological war against the Army and a justification for the subversion" and would contribute only in a minimal sense to reconciliation.⁴² For de la Torre, it was important to know what had happened in the past, but not now, not in 1998. It was too soon; the past was too recent for it to be investigated "scientifically"; that these investigations were taking place nevertheless meant, presumably, that they would not be valid. Yet de la Torre is very careful with his words. He does not say the report was not true, but that it was not scientific. And he did not say that it was best to forget, to not investigate the past, but that it was best to wait so that there would fewer emotions involved and until more "complete information" would be available. The truth Gerardi has praised so much, thus, was an incomplete truth and so could not be "the truth" of the conflict.

The interview with de la Torre ran along side one with human rights activist and then-director of the Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos (CALDH, Center for Legal Action in Human Rights), Frank La Rue. The visual display of the struggles over which memories to remember, over which history is true, was matched by La Rue's words. La Rue rejected claims that Remhi was biased and that the CEH would be as well by declaring, "I do not

⁴² Mynor Amézquita, "Una memoria histórica sin acuerdo: entrevista con Armando de la Torre y Frank la Rue," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 5 July 1998.

know why they would be partial if what emerges are the testimonies. The indication that the Army is responsible for 85% of human rights violations is not a product of the reports, but of reality." In response to de la Torre's suggestion that the reports were part of a campaign to discredit Guatemala, La Rue said, "Telling the truth is not a discredit."⁴³ In La Rue's view, and very unlike de la Torre's, the Remhi report's truth, based on the testimonies, was fully true and was "the truth" of the conflict. Their lack of agreement on truth as it related to the Remhi report, and even on whether there is only one truth, is also a lack of agreement about historical memory, for *Siglo Veintiuno* published the interviews under the heading "No agreement on historical memory." With this headline, historical memory and truth are discursively connected. Thus, while different individuals and sectors might disagree on the contents of the report, it seems at least that there is some agreement (if only for the editors of *Siglo Veintiuno*) that historical memory and truth are the same thing.

The juxtaposition of La Rue's affirmation that the reports and the testimonies were true against de la Torre's assertion that investigations into the past were partial and were part of an anti-military campaign was repeated the following year, shortly after *Memoria del Silencio* was published. At the end of February 1999, *Siglo Veintiuno* once again paired an interview with La Rue with the interview of a more conservative figure, in this case right-wing politician Jaime Cáceres Knox.⁴⁴ La Rue affirmed his support for the contents of the CEH when he said, "I believe the numbers and the acts speak for themselves. It is one thing to tell the truth and if the weight of responsibility falls more heavily to one side, it is because it happened that way. This does not imply bias." Echoing his support for the truth behind the testimonies, he responded to journalist Rodolfo A. Flores García's question about whether the CEH's attribution of "93% of the massacres" to the army was "a real number," by stating, "it happened that way because [that is what] the testimonies established."⁴⁵ The testimonies contained truth; they were a true reflection of reality. The CEH's clarified history, thus, based on the truth of the testimonies, on the memories of survivors, was the true history of the conflict.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Cáceres Knox had been part of the military governments of Carlos Arana Osorio and Kjell Laugerud García in the 1970s, and then ran for vice president for the right-wing Movimiento Nacional de la Liberación (MLN, National Liberation Movement).

⁴⁵ Rodolfo A. Flores García, "¿Y ahora, qué hacer con el informe de la CEH?," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 28 February 1999. The CEH, to be sure, had not concluded that the army was responsible for 93% of the *massacres*. This finding related to all human rights violations.

Cáceres Knox disagreed. Situating himself within the discursive framework, he said that, "the complete history [of the conflict] and the true instigators should be known"; he was not, however, entirely sure that this was written in the CEH report. Indeed, he believed that the report was distorted. In response to the same question about the army's responsibility for 93% of the massacres, for example, he declared that, as a mathematician, he knew that "statistics can be manipulated to tell the biggest lies,"⁴⁶ something which he clearly believed had happened. Gerardi had said that the military had distorted past events; Cáceres Knox declared that the CEH did the same thing. In this he was bolder than de la Torre had been. Cáceres Knox openly called the CEH's conclusions lies, which obviously contrasts with La Rue's declaration that the CEH's conclusions about responsibility, based on the testimonies, were "the truth." Yet despite Cáceres Knox's criticisms of *Memoria del Silencio*, he still argued for the importance of knowing the truth, of knowing history. Cáceres Knox and La Rue had different understandings of the past, just as de la Torre and La Rue had. Their versions of history were distinct because, as Halbwachs argued, they belonged to different social groups. Nevertheless, despite their embrace of different truths, members of both groups could still talk about the past in the same way.

Arzú's response to the publication of *Memoria del Silencio* was further evidence of the battle between memories of the conflict, between understandings of its truth, between narratives of the past. The report was presented in late February, but it was not until mid-March that an official reaction was issued. In an ad taken out in newspapers, the government's "initial position" about the report was that "the historical *interpretation* about the internal armed conflict is a contribution for a task which, given the complexity of the issue and its controversial character, has barely begun." In Jesuit Juan Hernández Pico's mind, this was simply "reducing the CEH Report to being one more investigation, and a debatable one at that."⁴⁷ The official reaction to *Memoria del Silencio* was, therefore, not to explicitly reject it, but to undermine it from within a discursive framework where it is important to know what happened in the past. Arzú's rejection is worded as a need to know more about the complexities of the conflict and by declaring the CEH to be one investigation among many.

The need to know what had happened in the past was not openly challenged, nor could the CEH report be silenced through assassination and disappearance, as the opposition had been

⁴⁶ Rodolfo A. Flores García, "¿Y ahora, qué hacer con el informe de la CEH?"

⁴⁷ Juan Hernández Pico, " 'Memoria del silencio': un informe estremecedor," *Revista Envío* 205 (April 1999), <http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/935> and reprinted in FLACSO's publication of his works. Emphasis added.

silenced since the 1950s. Such strategies for silencing views that were contrary to elite interests may have worked in previous decades, but the post-Peace era was (at least a little) different; things had to be done with greater subtlety.⁴⁸ This involved, in addition to declaring the CEH report to be simply one interpretation of history, and so not "the history" or "the truth" of the conflict, writing an alternate history: the Ministry of Education's *Historia Sinóptica de Guatemala*, published in 1999. In the letter introducing the *Summarized History of Guatemala*, Minister of Education Arabella Castro Quiñones stated, "It is impossible to imagine the construction of a renewed nation, pretending to ignore the importance of knowing its past." The knowledge she spoke of, furthermore, would help guide Guatemala to a better future, a future of "unity within diversity."⁴⁹ Her words fit well within the common discursive framework but, curiously, the internationally supported CEH, the creation of which the government had agreed to, is barely mentioned. Instead of including information from the report, readers are told to read the CEH report to learn more about, for example, Ríos Montt's scorched earth strategy.⁵⁰ As well, the short, very basic chronology of the conflict at the end of the volume does not mention genocide, perhaps the CEH's most significant conclusion. While not explicitly declaring the CEH report to be lies, as Cáceres Knox had done, the *Historia Sinóptica* is clearly a way to promote the government's own version of the conflict, one which does not include genocide, and barely includes the CEH.

The suggestion that Guatemalans read the report for themselves also has the effect of silencing it and its findings. The CEH report is over 5000 pages long and much of it is written in legal and complex language. In a country with 76% adult literacy, a number that drops for the indigenous population, where up to 43% do not speak Spanish, and where less than 50% are enrolled in secondary school,⁵¹ the suggestion is ridiculous.⁵² The *Historia Sinóptica de*

⁴⁸ Gerardi's assassination, of course, was not subtle. It was, however, one of the last times such a public and important figure would be dealt with in such an open and brutal way. Human rights defenders and peasant and anti-mining activists are consistently threatened and killed in post-Peace Guatemala, but none of them are archbishops.

⁴⁹ Ministerio de Educación, *Historia Sinóptica de Guatemala* (Guatemala City: Ministerio de Educación, 1999), ix.

⁵⁰ Ministerio de Educación, *Historia Sinóptica de Guatemala*, 451.

⁵¹ Statistics from 2008-2012. (UNICEF, "At a Glance: Guatemala," last modified 26 December 2013, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/guatemala_statistics.html and UNESCO, "Integral Family Literacy," last modified 10 February 2012, <http://www.unesco.org/ui/litbase/?menu=16&programme=94>.)

⁵² Understanding Guatemala's shortcomings in education and literacy, not to mention the cost and logistical difficulty in publishing and widely distributing copies of its report to far-flung and isolated communities, the ODHA produced a pictorial version of *Nunca Más* which included the types of violations committed and

Guatemala is the government's response to *Memoria del Silencio*; while the latter offered, according to Arzú, one "interpretation" of history, the former offered students what can only be understood as "the history" of Guatemala. The government, therefore, challenged the CEH not by calling for forgetting or calling its conclusions lies, but by putting the weight and resources of the state behind a different version of history, a version full of silences.

The idea that there is more than one truth or version of history can also be seen in former Director of Military Intelligence Mario Mérida's many opinion pieces in *El Periódico* and the few books he has published about the conflict. Fashioning himself a historian, in *Denied History* Mérida offered readers a compilation of "documents for debate" to help clarify "part of what happened during the internal armed conflict...so as to stimulate an exploration of its real origins." He sought not to exculpate those "charged with defending the State," nor to declare that the CEH was "absolutely false." Rather, in his effort to clarify parts of history (which the CEH also did and which is understood to be the equivalent of finding the truth) he wanted only to "record the partiality of a few aspects [of the CEH] which prevent it from attaining the description of 'official history.'" ⁵³ For Mérida, there really could be no doubt that the CEH report "twist[ed]" reality, a result of the fact that the Commission "undoubtedly" sympathized with the guerrilla. ⁵⁴ Given this, Mérida, quoting a piece he had written for *El Periódico*, declared that it was necessary to "listen to all versions of history with critical judgment" in order to write history as it should be—"self-critical, without ideological nuances, and unlike fiction." ⁵⁵ It is especially important, he added, for the youth to know all versions of history "so they can judge what happened impartially and prevent its repetition." ⁵⁶

Mérida clearly rejected the truth of the CEH, yet he spoke of the benefits of history and truth in much the same way as did those who believed in the CEH's truth. He also confirmed that there could be more than one version of history. Gerardi had argued that the military had silenced, twisted, and distorted the truth during the conflict, and that the Remhi Project, and also the CEH, un-silenced, un-twisted, and un-distorted it, finally exposing the one truth of the conflict for all to see. Mérida also observed a twisted and distorted truth, but for him, it was the CEH's history/truth. Mérida embraces a different history/truth than the one presented in *Memoria*

Remhi's conclusions and recommendations.

⁵³ Mario Mérida, *La Historia Negada: Compendio acerca del Conflicto Armado Interno en Guatemala* (2010), 29.

⁵⁴ Mérida, *La Historia Negada*, 42.

⁵⁵ Mérida, *La Historia Negada*, 31.

⁵⁶ Mérida, *La Historia Negada*, 42.

del Silencio. In his ideas about versions of history Mérida seems to contradict himself. He recognizes that there is more than one version of history, but he also seems to support the idea that there is an official history and that there really should only be one (self-critical and non-ideological) version of history. In this he is a bit like de la Torre and his insistence that a "scientific investigation" into the past be carried out. Yet for both men, and for many others, it is clear that they only want scientific and non-ideological investigations because they did not agree with the reports and their findings. The reports did not reflect their truth of the conflict so they must not, in fact, be true. The irony they seem unable to recognize is that their rejection of the reports is just as ideological as they believe the reports to be, suggesting that, unlike what they say in the public sphere, they do actually believe that there is only one truth and one history of the conflict.

Mérida brought memory and truth into his discussion in "Restoring memory." In the piece, he drew on guerrilla documents from the early 1980s to argue that the guerrilla's tactics, and not the state's, targeted Guatemala's indigenous groups; however, lest he be accused of trying to "refute what has been written about the supposed genocide," he stated that he merely sought to "correct the inexact allusions made regarding Plan Victoria 82."⁵⁷ For Mérida, as for Arzú, the past needs to be investigated in greater depth. In Mérida's view, as in de la Torre's, the guerrilla orchestrated a campaign of disinformation, both in Guatemala and internationally. This campaign cast the military in a negative light, leading to the arrival of unspecified international observers. Fortunately, Mérida wrote, these observers found evidence to show that the guerrilla also committed massacres and that the army was not solely responsible. As a result of these investigations, "other opinions are known," evidence that "certain reports about the armed conflict are not the only truth."⁵⁸ Though his truth and his history differed from those human rights activists, the Church, and more progressive sectors embraced, he, like they, framed history as memory and understood memory as history. What Mérida understood as "restoring memory" was the same process as what the CEH understood as "clarifying history" and what Remhi understood as "recuperating historical memory." Though the sources used to accomplish these

⁵⁷ Mario Mérida, "Restaurando la memoria," *El Periódico*, 19 July 2011. Plan Victoria 82 was the army's counterinsurgency strategy and a key piece of evidence human rights activists use to denounce the military and its actions.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Mérida repeated much the same thing in conversation in 2012, stating that exhumations being conducted in Guatemala were unearthing hard evidence of the guerrilla's crimes. (Conversation with author, 29 February 2012.)

things were different, all of them were oriented toward finding "the truth" of the conflict, or at least a truth that was more true.

Mérida and Arzú talk about different versions of history, different opinions about or interpretations of the past, and the existence of more than one truth. Taken at face value, their comments seem almost post-modern, whereas the human rights community's ideas about "the truth" and "the history" of the conflict seem untouched by post-modernism. But if their comments are put in the historical context of the post-Peace era, it becomes clear that conservatives' embrace of post-modern ideas about truth are opportunistic. Before Remhi and CEH's findings were made public, conservatives, including Arzú, also spoke of "the truth" and declared that the CEH would reveal "the truth" of the conflict and become the official history of that era. Once the findings about responsibility and violations were known, conservatives shifted their discourse. Conservatives like Arzú and Mérida rejected the Commission's findings by affirming that there was more than one truth about the past, and by reaffirming how important it was to know it. Just as Stern and others argued, the battle for memory is not waged against forgetting, but against the different memories different social groups understand as truth. Not all



Screen shot. 13 August 2014.

conservatives, of course, embrace these seemingly post-modern ideas. Avemilgua is an excellent example of this. At the bottom of every page on the veterans' association's website, they declare that "There is something more powerful than history....the truth. and [sic].....Guatemalans

deserve to know the truth!" The Avemilgua portal also includes a separate page on "The Only Version of our History," above. Interestingly, and perhaps tellingly, this page is blank.⁵⁹

Different groups have different narratives of the past that determine what is true and what is not. La Rue belongs to the human rights community, which has consistently opposed, among other things, military government and its version of the past. Cáceres Knox was himself part of one of Guatemala's long procession of military governments, while Mérida, de la Torre, and others are members of conservative social groups and so have similar memories and understandings about the past and its truth. Yet despite the difference of opinion about which history was true, in writing about *Nunca Más* and *Memoria del Silencio*, both conservative and more progressive commentators speak of history, memory, historical memory, and truth in the same way. The words are used almost interchangeably and, whether an individual believed that the testimonies and findings of either report were "the truth" or not, she or he argued for the importance of knowing the truth, of remembering the conflict so that the past would never be repeated.

Governmental Remembering

This chapter and the previous one have placed the human rights community as standing in opposition to conservatives sectors, including members of government, with little suggestion that the situation might be more complex. Yet the line between these groups is often blurry; speaking of the government, Tani Adams describes human rights activists as "mov[ing] fluidly in and out of government positions" in the post-Peace era.⁶⁰ This was especially true during the conservative administrations of Óscar Berger and Alfonso Portillo. Those who served in Berger's administration, at least for a time, include Rosalina Tuyuc as the head of the Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento (PNR, National Reparations Program), which will be discussed below; Víctor Montejo as the Secretary of the Peace; and Frank La Rue as the head of the Comisión

⁵⁹ Asociación de Veteranos Militares de Guatemala, "La Única Versión de nuestra Historia," *Asociación de Veteranos Militares de Guatemala*, accessed 6 October 2013, <http://www.avemilgua.org/lahistoria.html>. Avemilgua has since updated their webpage. It no longer includes declarations about the one version of history. Instead, the page (<http://www.avemilgua.net/>) advertises Avemilgua's books, *Guatemala Beseiged* and *How the Peace Was Manipulated*. In announcing the books, the Asociación wondered, "Is it worth it to look to the past?" The question was left unanswered, though Avemilgua's foray into history suggests that it is, even if the way they ask the question suggests that the answer is no.

⁶⁰ Adams, *Consumed by Violence*, 11-2.

Presidencial Coordinadora de la Política del Ejecutivo en Materia de Derechos Humanos (Copredek, Presidential Human Rights Commission). In Portillo's Frente Republicano Guatemalteco (FRG, Guatemalan Republican Front) administration, former guerrilla leader Pedro Palma Lau served as Secretary of Agrarian Affairs, former CEH commissioner Otilia Lux de Cotí served as the Secretary of Culture and Sport, and Remhi's Edgar Gutiérrez served (quite polemically) as the head of the Secretaría de Análisis Estratégico (SAE, Secretariat of Strategic Analysis).

These individuals worked within state institutions and often promoted agendas that were at odds with the agendas or interests of other state institutions. They also sometimes, as in the case of the PNR, imported the human rights community's discourse into the functioning of state institutions. The PNR, tasked with compensating victims of the conflict, was finally created in 2003, several years after the CEH recommended it be created and due in large part to the human rights community's reaction to Berger's announcement that he would pay ex-PACs for the "services" they had given to the military during the conflict. The legislation creating the PNR spoke only of "national reconciliation," "the construction of a culture of harmony and mutual respect," and a firm and lasting peace, so the PNR itself was left to flesh out its mission and vision. In 2002, prior to the PNR's creation, the Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia (Multi-institutional Agency for Peace and Harmony) published a report, known as *El Libro Azul*, which the PNR would adopt and assume as its guiding principle.⁶¹ To repair some of the damage done to the social fabric, the Instancia, and later the PNR, promoted "processes directed toward the knowing of the truth, with an emphasis on the study and comprehension of the causes and effects of the armed confrontation." The authors of *El Libro Azul* wrote that "only based on the effective knowing and recognition of the past, access to justice, and reparations and compensation, can the foundations of reconciliation be laid."⁶² They added that the state's commitment to create the PNR was "a sure sign that the lesson of history has been learned" and that the state sought to avoid repetition.⁶³

⁶¹ "Informe de la Evaluación Conjunta del Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento y de los Programas de Aypoo al PNR de GTZ y PNUD," (2007), 33, http://www.berghof-peacesupport.org/publications/GT_Informe_Final_EC_PNR.pdf.

⁶² Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia, *El Libro Azul: Política Pública de Resarcimiento*, (Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia, 2003), 3-5.

⁶³ Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia, *El Libro Azul*, 9-10.

The PNR, initially directed by Tuyuc, respected human rights activist and founder of the Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala (Conavigua, National Coordinating Committee of Widows of Guatemala),⁶⁴ adopted much of the Instancia's vision, as seen in the Executive Director's 2005 report. The report declared that it would continue to work to contribute to "community cohesion" and to support "the construction of the social fabric." These, for the PNR, were the "foundation for the non-repetition of human rights violations."⁶⁵ The "preserv[ation of] historical memory" and knowing "the truth of what happened" were imagined as measures which would contribute to the dignification of the victims. The PNR also hoped to create museums in public spaces to help Guatemalans know the truth of the past "as a guarantee of non-repetition."⁶⁶ In this report, the PNR, a state institution, obviously embraces the human rights community's idea of "the truth"/historical memory, very likely because the PNR was originally directed by a human rights activist. Unlike in Arzú's later statements or those of Mérida, there is little room for more than one truth or interpretation of history. All this highlights the fluidity of group membership and discourse in post-Peace Guatemala.

The present past

Declarations that practices of the past were returning to darken the present, that powerful individuals and sectors from the past were gaining power once again, form an additional part of Guatemala's post-Peace discourse. Not only must the past be remembered so that it never happens again, but the past *was* happening again. With each assassination, each clash between police and civilians, each military operation, each act of violence newspapers reported on in the post-Peace era, concerns were raised that these were signs that past patterns of violence were reemerging. Comparisons between past and present violence and policies are well founded. Joint military-police operations against criminal organizations or protestors *did* bear a striking resemblance to tactics used during counterinsurgency campaigns. The assassination or intimidation of activists and the raiding of their offices *was* very similar to the actions taken

⁶⁴ Diane M. Nelson, *Reckoning: The Ends of War in Guatemala* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 299.

⁶⁵ Director Ejecutivo Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento, "Informe Final" (2005), 2.

⁶⁶ PNR, "Informe Final," 21-22. To be sure that the truth was known throughout the country, the PNR proposed to deliver copies of the CEH report to communities which had suffered massive and systematic human rights violations, as the CEH had intended but ultimately failed to do.

against labor, students, and victims' activists. *Femicidio*⁶⁷ was very like the violence women had suffered during the conflict.

Yet more than a return to the past, there is continuity with the past. As Sam Colop wrote in 2002, "the awful past was never left behind. It has always been present, just as the general of the scorched earth has."⁶⁸ For Colop, Efraín Ríos Montt, "the general of the scorched earth," represented a continuation of the past in the present. Ríos Montt represented the past and its abuses, and his power and position in the post-Peace suggested that Arzú's speech on 29 December 1996, when he declared that the signing of the Peace marked the beginning of a new chapter in Guatemala's history, was empty rhetoric. The continued power and presence of men like Ríos Montt and the ex-PACs spurred many to confirm that the past, its protagonists—more accurately, antagonists—and practices, was neither dead nor buried. Instead, the past was alive, haunting the halls of Congress, the Presidential Palace, and the highways of the Petén. As Vela Castañeda wrote, "we must stop thinking as if the past were something foreign and strange compared to what we are now."⁶⁹

Yet why was the past present? Guatemalans had been told that if they remembered the past, it would not happen again. This, again, is the international discourse of truth commissions. Since "the past" was happening again, did Guatemalans not remember enough? Was the past repeating itself because there was not enough memory? The continued calls for memory by journalists and members of Guatemala's human rights organizations have made throughout the post-Peace period point to this conclusion. Yet searching for a reason within the discursive framework as to why the past has returned is disappointing. Perhaps the idea that remembering will prevent a repetition of the past is too simplistic, too linear. When contrasted with declarations that the past is indeed happening again, the discursive ease with which remembering prevents repetition is revealed to be lacking.

More than just a lack of memory contributes to a return to the past. Priscilla Hayner wrote that fulfilling truth commissions' recommendations is also a key aspect of the discourse of truth commissions. Indeed, both the CEH and Remhi included potentially transformative reforms, many of which echoed the contents of the Peace Accords, and some of which went further than the Accords. The lack of meaningful reform is certainly an essential part of the

⁶⁷ *Femicidio* is generally defined as the killing of women for being women.

⁶⁸ Sam Colop, "Las huestes del general," *Prensa Libre*, 26 June 2002.

⁶⁹ Vela, "Memorias de una Batalla," 1.

explanation as to why the "ghosts of the past"⁷⁰ have reappeared; that Guatemalan politics, society, and the economy remain largely unchanged, that the Peace Accords and the commissions' recommendations have gone unfulfilled contributes directly to why the ghosts continue to haunt Guatemala. They refuse to go quietly to their graves because the causes of the conflict remain, and continue to inspire.

The walls of the buildings that line la Sexta Avenida in downtown Guatemala City serve as an ideal canvas for street artists to denounce governmental policies, and to highlight similarities and continuities between past and present. In the photo below, *desalojos*, or violent evictions, in the Polochic Valley inspired artists to write, "*Desalojos continue genocide.*" The



La Sexta Avenida, Zona 1. Photo by author. 9 January 2012.

artists added, "civilian or military government....history repeats itself." The sketches on the wall are also interesting. On one side of the wall, a house in flames. On the other, a woman's face and

⁷⁰ As many called them. See, for example, Carlos Ajanel Soberanis, "Violencia política: Denuncian retorno de fantasmas del terror," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 15 Mayo 1999; Martín Rodríguez, " 'Estamos de regreso al pasado,' " *Prensa Libre*, 31 August 2003.

the question "*¿Donde estás?*," the quintessential question about the disappeared. The artist asks the woman, "Where are you?" The question goes unanswered. She responds with silence, a silence the government imitates. Likely the work of various artists, the wall represents the conflict and post-Peace discourse about the ghosts of the past perfectly. "Where are you?" rejects forgetting. The woman is reminded that she has not been forgotten, and passersby are not allowed to forget her. The question is a call for memory and a statement that at least one person remembers. "*Desalojos* continue the genocide" is also a call for memory, a call to remember what the state and military did to its own citizens, and what they continue to do. "*Desalojos* continue the genocide" is a statement that the past lives on, that history is repeating itself; it is a statement, as the artist said, that little changed in the shift from military to civilian government.

Desalojos, of course, are carried out for economic reasons, at the request of large landowners who ask the military to remove peasants who have "invaded" their land so that more land can be planted with export crops.⁷¹ The links between economic interests and state-sponsored violence are on full display in the idea that "*desalojos* continue the genocide." During the conflict, "development" and national security were closely linked, as seen in the National Plan for Security and Development, put into effect in April 1982.⁷² The Río Negro massacre, which was linked to the construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Chixoy River, also clearly demonstrates these links, as does the presence of numerous army detachments in eastern parts of Guatemala where the guerrilla were far less active than in the highlands and other regions. Vast *fincas* and ranches dominate the eastern part of the country, including the Polochic Valley. It is also, however, where many Q'eqchi' communities lived during the conflict and continue to live (often, landowners would be quick to point out, on land to which they do not have title) and where massacres, assassinations, and forced disappearances of peasant activists were and are common. This can be seen in the case of the 1978 Panzós massacre and the 2011 *desalojos* of several communities in the Polochic Valley, located just to the south of Panzós.

While "*desalojos* continue the genocide" links past and present repression and violence against rural communities, it might also do more than this. Unlike other calls for memory that focus on remembering the violations and the victims, "*desalojos* continue the genocide" also

⁷¹ See, for example, Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA, "Polochic Evictions," <http://www.ghrc-usa.org/our-work/current-cases/polochic/>.

⁷² Ejército de Guatemala, "Plan Nacional de Seguridad y Desarrollo," http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB419/docs/VII.%20Plan_Nacional_de_Seguridad_y_Developmento_%28PNSD%29,_1.4.82.pdf.

reminds passers by of the links between powerful economic sectors and state-sponsored violence. This is true for state-sponsored violence both during the conflict and after its official end. It recalls the ties between the economic elite (i.e., CACIF), Ríos Montt's de facto government, and counterinsurgency campaigns, as the CEH and Rodríguez Pellecer pointed out. It also recalls continued inequality and the failure of the Peace Accords to transform Guatemala and eliminate the causes of the conflict,⁷³ of the "need" for violently evicting peasants from the communities they founded and the land they farm. In this, it is perhaps even more powerful a reminder than "*Dónde estás?*," which focuses on state-sponsored violence, but does not bring the depth and range of the government's motivations to mind in the same way as "*desalojos* continue the genocide." The latter is an indictment of post-Peace Guatemala's extreme inequality, and of the failure of the Peace Accords to address the situation.

The statements on the wall echo the human rights community's discursive framework of *nunca más*. Guatemala's common discursive framework can be seen in Gerardi's declaration that truth would encourage Guatemalans to "commit ourselves to action so that those abominable acts never happen again." It can be seen in Arzú's declaration that "We cannot forget," a statement Pérez Molina completed when he added the reason for remembering: "so that [the past] is not repeated." This discourse dominates thanks to the human rights community's tireless efforts and insistence, at great personal risk, that their loved ones not be forgotten and that their whereabouts be revealed. The discourse dictates what language those who oppose remembering must use. Open calls for forgetting are rare; instead, forgetting is masked, as seen in the previous chapter. The need to hide forgetting, to disguise it as remembering, is further evidence that a common discursive framework exists in Guatemala. But the strength of this once marginalized and now common discourse cannot be over-estimated. The forces pushing for forgetting remain those with the most economic, cultural, and political power, and their will to forget is as strong as it has ever been.

⁷³ Again, Tani Adams, adds that CACIF campaigned strongly against the 1999 referendum which would have allowed many of the Peace Accords provisions to be enacted. (Adams, *Consumed by Violence*, 22-3.)

Chapter Four

El Salvador: *Verdad* or *Olvido*

Recuerdas aún? O has decidido olvidar, como la mayoría, esta guerra cuyos muertos todavía cantan por las noches and aman las causas por las que murieron?

Dónde están los nombres de los hombre y mujeres, de los niños y las niñas de la guerra? Porque una pared de granito, por inmensa que sea, no devuelve sus rostros ni su vida. Por mucho que así lo haya recomendado una comisión extranjera y el gobierno de turno no haya dado el apoyo requerido y el nombre de Oscar Arnulfo Romero se encuentre entre ellos, éstos aún nos llaman.

No los oyes? Es porque el olvido, no la muerte, ha comenzado a silenciarlos.¹

While Otto Pérez Molina, Monseñor Gerardi, and others from a range of sectors insist that Guatemala must remember its past so that it never happens again, the situation is quite different in El Salvador. No common discursive framework exists in El Salvador that dictates that those who promote forgetting and silence must do so from within its limits. Aspects of the *nunca más* framework are certainly present in El Salvador's post-Peace public spaces, but far from being common to all sides of the political divide, only more progressive sectors and human rights and victims' organizations demand that Salvadorans remember the past to prevent its repetition. At the same time, calls made specifically for memory have been slow to develop in El Salvador and have not become as omnipresent as they are in Guatemala. (The presence of memory in post-Peace Salvadoran discourse will be discussed in the next chapter.) Instead, the human rights community insists first and foremost that the truth be known so that El Salvador's future is distinct from its past. The formula whereby truth works to foster national reconciliation and prevent a repetition of the past is clearly laid out in the mandate of the Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador (Truth Commission for El Salvador); this is the discourse which progressive and human rights groups and activists repeat when discussing the past and its role in the future. Reconciling and guaranteeing non-repetition are the work that truth does.

¹ Do you still remember? Or have you, like the majority, decided to forget this war whose dead still sing in the night and love the causes which they died for? Where are the names of the men and women, of the boys and girls of the war? Because a wall of granite, as immense as it is, does not give back their faces nor their lives. No matter that a foreign commission has recommended it [be built] like that and that the current government has given the necessary support and that the name of Óscar Arnulfo Romero can be found among them, they still call to us. You don't hear them? It's because forgetting, not death, has begun to silence them. Vanessa Núñez Handal, *Díos Tenía Miedo*, (Guatemala City: F&G Editores, 2011), 103.

Progressive sectors—perhaps most significantly and certainly most vocally and persistently, the Jesuits and their colleagues at the Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas" (UCA, Central American University "José Simeón Cañas") in San Salvador—repeat that truth is the foundation for any hope that the past will not be repeated and that only by knowing the truth is reconciliation possible. When they say this, they are proclaiming their opposition to very powerful conservative sectors' equally persistent declarations that only amnesty and forgetting will lead to *nunca más*. Yet in the first several months after the final Peace Accord was signed, the right—those with ties to the military or the Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA, Nationalist Republican Alliance)—did not openly reject truth and call for amnesty and forgetting. Though the ARENA government led by the "Peace President," Alfredo Cristiani, passed its first post-Peace amnesty in January 1992, less than a week after the final Peace Accord was signed, the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional (National Reconciliation Law) acknowledged the work of the Truth Commission and recognized, to some extent, that *some* Salvadorans might want to "clarify" *some* of the events of the past. As the months passed, conservative politicians and commentators increasingly voiced concerns that the truth the Truth Commission would reveal would be partial—both incomplete *and* biased. Yet even in these worries, and despite the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional, which proposed amnesty and *perdón* as the best ways to achieve national reconciliation, the work of truth was rarely questioned.

The rejection of truth in favor of the work that amnesty does became more and more present in the public sphere in late 1992 and early 1993. In those months, from the perspective of those on the right, the promotion of amnesty and forgetting became necessary. At that time, it became increasingly clear that the two UN-sponsored commissions charged with investigating human rights abuses during the war (the Truth Commission and the Ad-Hoc Commission) would reveal a truth that was not the right's own. These commissions were expected to confirm that ARENA's founder, Roberto D'Aubuisson, had been heavily involved in death squads and had ordered the 1980 assassination of monseñor Óscar Arnulfo Romero, and that the military and paramilitary organizations were responsible for the majority of the human rights violations committed during 12 years of Civil War. Conservative discourse solidified after the Ad-Hoc Commission recommended discharging or transferring 102 senior officers involved in human rights abuses, including the Minister of Defense and the rest of the Military Academy's 1966-67

graduating class,² and when Cristiani's request to the UN to withhold the names of the perpetrators was rejected. It was no longer enough to undermine the work of the Truth Commission; rather, it was necessary to attack the work of truth itself. Led by Cristiani, conservatives declared that only amnesty would lead to reconciliation and non-repetition. The night before the Truth Commission report was published Cristiani declared that a complete and unconditional amnesty was necessary and that all of the past must be "erased, eliminated, and forgotten."³ His declaration was given shape in the Ley de Amnistía General para la Consolidación de la Paz (General Amnesty Law for the Consolidation of Peace), passed in March 1993, which equated amnesty with *perdón* and *olvido*. Amnesty as the best way to achieve reconciliation and non-repetition has dominated conservative discourse ever since.

A struggle over words exists in El Salvador. While conservatives promote their dominant discourse about amnesty and forgetting, the human rights community insists on a counterdiscourse that calls for truth, and sometimes memory. These are El Salvador's competing discourses and discursive frameworks, and they emerge most clearly when the 1993 Amnesty Law is threatened. It is at this and other moments of rupture and debate when conservatives' discourse is questioned and the hegemonic process reveals itself. In these moments, struggles over language and meaning appear and it becomes most apparent that, other than to declare that the past—often vaguely labeled "it"—must not happen again, there is no common way to talk about the past or present; subalterns do not use elite frameworks to express their own views on the subject. Rather, two groups with not always stable membership have each established their own way of talking about the past; they each have their own discursive framework. They have each created what Steve Stern terms emblematic memory, dictating which events will be included in the group's collective memory and which will be forgotten or "pushed back toward the fringes," as well as what meaning these events will be imbued with.⁴

Conservative Salvadorans' embrace of amnesty and forgetting is akin to what Stern describes as "memory as a closed box." As in Chile, Salvadorans who promote forgetting believe that it is the best way to overcome the past. The conservative political, economic, and social elite

² Diana Villiers Negroponte, *Seeking Peace in El Salvador: The Struggle to Reconstruct a Nation at the End of the Cold War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 138-43.

³ "Mensaje dirigido a la nación por el excelentísimo señor presidente de la República, Licenciado Félix Alfredo Cristiani el día 18 de marzo 1993," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 19 March 1993.

⁴ Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 105-6.

and their allies insist on amnesty and seek to silence the past, thereby closing El Salvador's memory box and sealing it firmly. Human rights and progressive civil society organizations and their allies refuse to allow the box to be closed. They demand truth and justice; they demand that the amnesty be overturned and that the victims' dignity be returned to them. Though the different sectors do not share a discursive framework, the debate between truth and amnesty/forgetting does itself bear a striking resemblance to such a framework, with the debate setting the limits of what can be said about the past in El Salvador. Certainly, few promote a third option.

One final comment is necessary. The Truth Commission plays a central role in this chapter's narrative about the development of post-Peace El Salvador's discourse. Yet this does not mean that the Truth Commission itself is frequently mentioned in the Salvadoran public sphere. Quite the opposite: the Truth Commission is rarely mentioned in the conservative media or in conservative discourse and is discussed only a bit more often among more progressive sectors. There are certainly various reasons for this, not the least of which is likely the firm grip conservatives have had on government and the mainstream media, and conservatives' corresponding interest in not talking about past actions which paint them in a negative light. Another reason might be that much of the information in the Truth Commission report was known prior to the signing of the Peace Accords. According to Salvador Samayoa, the real importance of the report, *De la Locura a la Esperanza*, lies in fact that the report corroborated and supported information that was already circulating and helped to spread that information further.⁵ The Truth Commission mandate and report are used here as very clear, very official examples of human rights organizations' truth-centered discursive framework. They are also both very public and very early examples of that framework. As for conservative sectors' framework rejecting truth, the Truth Commission and its report are also central and have a critical place in debates about amnesty. Thus, though the Truth Commission and its report are rarely mentioned in El Salvador, they remain an absent presence in post-Peace discourse.

⁵ Xiomara E. Lazo Fuentes and Eduardo Rey Tristán, "Es la Justicia el Precio de la Paz? Logros y Limitaciones en el Proceso de Paz salvadoreño," in *Conflicto, Memoria y Pasado Traumáticos: El Salvador Contemporáneo*, eds. Eduardo Rey Tristán and Pilar Cagiao Vila (Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago Compostela, 2011), 225.

Amnesty and Reconciliation

The ink was hardly dry on El Salvador's final Peace Accord when newspapers exploded with a debate about the work of the Comisión de la Verdad. The government and Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN, Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) negotiated and agreed on the mandate of the Comisión de la Verdad in the Mexico Accords, signed 27 April 1991.⁶ This rather bare bones outline of the Commission and its work was fleshed out more in the Annex to those Accords, signed the same day. The government and FMLN "reaffirmed" their commitment to reconciliation and acknowledged both that "the complete truth" about key acts of violence must be known and that "the resolve and means to establish the truth [must] be strengthened." Taking these general principles into consideration, the Commission was charged with "investigating serious acts of violence that have occurred since 1980 and whose impact on society urgently requires that the public should know the truth." In selecting which acts of violence to investigate, the commissioners were instructed to

take into account:

- a) The exceptional importance that may be attached to the acts to be investigated, their characteristics and impact, and the social unrest to which they gave rise; and
- b) The need to create confidence in the positive changes which the peace process is promoting and to assist the transition to national reconciliation.

The Truth Commission, furthermore, was tasked with making recommendations about "legal, political or administrative measures" that "may include measures to prevent the repetition of such acts, and initiatives to promote national reconciliation." Significantly, the government and FMLN agreed to comply with the Commission's recommendations.⁷ The work of the Truth Commission and its recommendations, therefore, would help to ensure that "such acts" were not repeated in the future. The initial framework of understanding regarding the work that truth does was that knowing the truth about grave acts of violence was not only essential in and of itself, but would also contribute to national reconciliation and help ensure non-repetition.

⁶ David Escobar Galindo's comments about how the mandate came into being are interesting. One of the government's negotiators, he wrote that the Truth Commission was negotiated in one day, in the midst of heavy debate about constitutional reform, meaning that the Accord creating the Truth Commission was largely unnoticed. (David Escobar Galindo, "Las jornadas de abril," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 2 May 1998.)

⁷ "El Salvador: Mexico Peace Agreements—Provisions Creating the Commission on Truth," 27 April 1991, <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/commissions/El%20Salvador-Charter.pdf>.

In the months after the final Accord was signed, conservatives did not necessarily challenge this vision,⁸ but they passed a partial amnesty nevertheless and quickly began to challenge the truth the Truth Commission's investigations would reveal, though not the benefits of truth itself. The January 1992 Ley de Reconciliación Nacional and subsequent concerns about the Truth Commission's bias served both to undermine the work of the Truth Commission and its ability to foster reconciliation, and began to temporarily shift the terms of discussion to be less about truth and more about amnesty and *perdón*.

As soon as ARENA proposed the partial amnesty that would become the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional, conservatives rushed to support the idea that amnesty and *perdón* were the most appropriate ways to address past violence. President of the Legislative Assembly, ARENA's Roberto Angulo, announced his support for a full amnesty that granted "*perdón* for all" and called on Salvadorans not to rub salt in society's open wounds and to look for true reconciliation instead. The conservative Partido de la Conciliación Nacional (PCN, National Conciliation Party) echoed Angulo's support for a complete amnesty that reconciled the military and the FMLN, declaring that *perdón* must be neither "restricted nor partial."⁹

The Law passed unanimously on 23 January. The Amnesty focused in particular on members of the FMLN, ensuring that they would be able to participate in politics after they had laid down their arms. Though lawmakers also spoke of "social coexistence based on mutual respect," the more overarching motivation behind the law was the need to promote "a process of national reconciliation in which *perdón* plays an important role."¹⁰ An unnamed journalist at *La Prensa Gráfica* agreed. When the newspaper announced the passage of the Law, it was described as "the first legislative step in the process of 'reconciliation.'" ¹¹

In the text of the Law and in reactions to its passage, neither the work of the Truth Commission nor that of truth itself were openly challenged. Indeed, the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional affirmed the necessity of "giv[ing] the Truth Commission time to carry out its investigations." However, while not directly challenging the work of truth or that of the Truth Commission, the Law imposed time limits on the search for truth, and even for justice. Lawmakers reasoned that, "to reconstruct our society, it is convenient to establish a sensible time

⁸ See, for example, Mauricio Ernesto Vargas, "Amanece en El Salvador," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 13 December 1992.

⁹ Alba Elsie Lizama, "Pugna política por términos de la amnistía que aprobará Asamblea," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 22 January 1992.

¹⁰ Ley de Reconciliación Nacional.

¹¹ "Aprobada a medianoche Ley de Reconciliación," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 24 January 1992.

period so that those citizens who feel that they are victims of the acts that took place in those years can request the clarification of those acts," adding, "it is also equally important to prevent the uncertainty of judicial prosecution from burdening society for an undefined length of time." Support, even if only nominal, for the work that both truth and the Truth Commission were meant to do can further be seen in the fact that those cases which would be investigated by the Truth Commission were excluded from the amnesty.¹² Six months after the publication of the Commission's report, the Law granted the Legislative Assembly the power to award amnesty in these cases or not.¹³ Six months, apparently, was enough time for truth to create reconciliation; if it had not succeeded by then, amnesty would be given a chance.

Though it is unclear how exactly the details of not granting amnesty to those responsible for an as of yet undetermined list of crimes created by an as of yet unformed Commission was going to function, it is nevertheless clear that neither the Law nor conservative politicians and journalists were explicitly denying the value of truth or the validity of needing to find it. Though the Law might more appropriately be seen as limiting truth and justice, the Law fits within the framework established by the Peace Accords that determined that knowing the truth about past violence would contribute to reconciliation. Lawmakers and commentators, however, were also introducing an alternate way to achieve reconciliation and prevent a repetition of the past: amnesty and *perdón*. Thus, the Peace was not even a week old when the pairing of truth with reconciliation and non-repetition, as in the Truth Commission mandate, was consumed, at least for a short time, by a conservative-led discussion about amnesty and *perdón* and how *these* were best for El Salvador's future.

A Partial Truth I

With the passage of the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional, conservative groups were already leaning toward the idea that amnesty and *perdón*—soon to be joined by *olvido*—would perform the work that the Mexico Accord set out for truth; yet conservative sectors could not simply reject truth as guaranteeing non-repetition. Both ARENA and the FMLN constantly accused the other of not complying with the Peace Accords. They seemed to be involved in a competition over who was fulfilling their part of the Peace Accords best. So with the

¹² Ley de Reconciliación Nacional.

¹³ See, for example, "Aprobada a medianoche Ley de Reconciliación," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 24 January 1992.

groundwork laid for the equation of amnesty and *perdón* with reconciliation and non-repetition, conservative journalists, commentators, politicians, and military officers shifted their focus and embarked on a campaign that raised concerns about the Truth Commission's investigations. In addition to generally undermining the Truth Commission's work, they questioned whether the Commission would investigate and reveal the *whole* truth. These concerns further prepared Salvadorans to accept declarations Cristiani and the military made once the report was published.

In an opinion piece in *El Diario de Hoy*, Rubén Zeledón offered what is likely the most eloquent reminder that the FMLN were not without responsibility for human rights violations. He called on the commissioners to keep in mind that, "the other side...was not walking around handing out candy during 12 years of fighting."¹⁴ Others made more specific suggestions about which of the FMLN's crimes should be investigated. These included the assassination of mayors in FMLN-controlled areas; the 1989 assassination of then-Minister of the Presidency, Antonio Rodríguez Porth; and the assassination of judges and other judicial personnel in the early 1980s.¹⁵ Commentator Antonio de Sandoval-Martínez y Urrutia wondered if the truth that "the truth commission," in quotation marks and lower case, came to investigate was the left's truth because people only talked about "monseñor Romero, the Jesuit priests, etc." His response was to offer the Commission a long list of crimes to investigate.¹⁶ Carlos Girón S. also expressed concern about the Truth Commission's work, and displayed his fondness for quotation marks. He wrote that "the 'Truth Commission' " had arrived in the country and would have the "delicate task" of investigating the past in an "attempt to clarify the 'crimes' " committed during the conflict, a conflict which, he noted, the FMLN had unleashed. "Even though," he wrote, "it is said that 'the war crimes' will be clarified," the only ones discussed are those connected to the Armed Forces. "The Salvadoran people," he added, "doubt very much that, according to the pattern of 'truth' that has been adopted and in accordance with how it is 'nourished' with pertinent

¹⁴ Rubén Zeledón, "Sobre la comisión de la verdad," *El Diario de Hoy*, 8 January 1993.

¹⁵ "Comisión deberá investigar los asesinatos de alcaldes," *El Diario de Hoy*, 13 February 1992; "Comisión de la Verdad llegará mañana al país," *El Diario de Hoy*, 13 July 1992; "Casos de jueces asesinados por FMLN a Comisión de la Verdad," *El Diario de Hoy*, 21 July 1992.

¹⁶ Antonio de Sandoval-Martínez y Urrutia, "Los 'observadores' de ONUSAL (II)," *El Diario de Hoy*, 19 August 1992. Hermann W. Bruch would explain what all the lower case meant at the end of March 1993, after the report had been published. He wrote the truth commission in lower case (*minúsculos*) because it had minor (*minúsculo*) value. (Hermann W. Bruch, "Una verdad que no es seria, deja de ser verdad," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 28 March 1993.) *El Diario de Hoy* employed a similar strategy to attempt to delegitimize the Truth Commission's work, calling it the "so-called 'truth commission'" throughout April 1993 (for example, on 4, 15, 16, 24 April).

information, 'the Truth Commission' will really succeed in clarifying the acts." He also pointed to the "type of information and 'evidence' " the Commission used to raise questions about its impartiality. He concluded by calling on the Commission to investigate the FMLN's assassinations.¹⁷

Girón's disdain for the Truth Commission and its investigation is clear, but his strategy for discrediting the Commission does not necessarily contradict the idea that truth was an essential foundation for reconciliation. He and other critics seemed to be operating on the principle that truth actually would lead to reconciliation, as seen in Armando Calderón Sol's January 1993 statement to that effect. Calderón Sol, the leader of ARENA and the next president of El Salvador, reminded commissioners that they must "keep the search for the truth and the complete and absolute reconciliation of our society in mind."¹⁸ Truth was not specifically being undervalued; Girón, Calderón Sol, and others simply wanted the truth—indeed, the regime of truth—that emerged from the Truth Commission's report to be one that included the crimes they believed were significant. They did not want the Commission to only investigate the military's violence.¹⁹

Concerned that the Truth Commission's investigations into the truth would not be complete, many state institutions and their members agreed to cooperate with the Commission. This included the Armed Forces, for, as Minister of Defense René Emilio Ponce said, "We have nothing to hide"; "there is no need to fear truth."²⁰ While offering to cooperate and proclaiming support for the Truth Commission and actually cooperating are very different things, few openly opposed the Truth Commission's work. They worked within this reality and the framework established by the Mexico Accord to try to ensure that the truth revealed would be neither incomplete nor biased, at least not in their eyes, for an incomplete or biased truth would certainly not lead to reconciliation. This is clear in the military's delivery of information regarding 327 of the FMLN's violations to the Truth Commission.²¹

¹⁷ Carlos Girón S., "Llega la "Comisión de la Verdad," *El Diario de Hoy*, 16 July 1992. In 1994, he called it the Comisión de la Vergüenza, the Commission of Shame, and said that Salvadorans needed, "once and for all, to throw the report of 'Commission of Shame' into the trash." (Carlos Girón S., "Hay que olvidarse de la 'Comisión de la vergüenza,'" *El Diario de Hoy*, 23 May 1994.)

¹⁸ "Critican a Comisión Ad Hoc por actuar con subjetividad," *El Diario de Hoy*, 16 January 1993. He added that their work, he added, must not contribute to "reviving wounds."

¹⁹ After all, this was what the Ad-Hoc Commission was for.

²⁰ "Demandan investigación y castigo de crímenes FMLN," *El Diario de Hoy*, 8 July 1992; "El Ejército no dejó zonas minadas afirma Gral. Vargas," *El Diario de Hoy*, 21 August 1992.

²¹ "Informe de delitos e imputados en crímenes del Fmln da la FA," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 9 October 1992.

Cristiani's affirmations in the weeks before the Truth Commission report was published are a case in point. He declared that the report should lead to reconciliation and not more confrontation. The whole purpose of finding the truth was to help the "wounds" of the past "close and heal." The truth was supposed to guarantee that "this type of situation" would not be repeated in the future. And he hoped that it did.²² Here, Cristiani was both supporting the work of truth, and expressing his doubts about the work of the Truth Commission, as others had done. Significantly, however, what he seems to really believe is that a limited, incomplete truth is best, for he added that since the report was meant to foster reconciliation, it would be best not to name names, not just yet, as it could lead to "confrontation," precisely what the report was meant to prevent.²³ Rather than immediately naming the names of the perpetrators, he proposed doing so at a more opportune moment.²⁴ His solution was an incomplete or delayed truth, or even an incomplete *and* delayed truth. This type of truth would, as Cristiani said in his requests to the UN, "make the path toward reconciliation easier."²⁵ So while, on the one hand, an incomplete truth which did not include the FMLN's crimes (and so only included the military's) would not lead to reconciliation or work to guarantee non-repetition, an incomplete truth which left out the perpetrators' names, or a delayed truth (delayed until it would do less harm to ARENA's election campaign) would. But, regardless of the kind of truth being promoted, the idea remained that truth, in some form, would lead to a better future for El Salvador.

Not everyone on the right, however, agreed that a nameless (i.e., incomplete) or delayed truth was as necessary as Cristiani did. These differences of opinion revealed some of the fissures in the Salvadoran right. In early March, though they would soon declare the opposite,²⁶ *La Prensa Gráfica's* editors reminded readers that the whole point of the Truth Commission was "to contribute, through the most truthful knowledge about what happened during the war, to reconciliation," and to make recommendations to prevent a repetition of the past. Given this, and since it was necessary to "forever close a tragic chapter in our history," the editors expressed their doubts that the best way to close that chapter was "to know a generic part [of it], or to aim to defer knowing the full report." The editors continued, affirming that, if the investigation was meant to unearth "a truth that was really true, it would be necessary to prepare for a bitter pill to

²² "Informe de Comisión de la Verdad deberá construir no desunir," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 2 March 1993.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "Cristiani espera no afecte reconciliación el Informe," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 12 March 1993.

²⁵ "Acuerdo establece que ONU hará publica Informe," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 4 March 1993.

²⁶ Editorial, "La hora del 'punto final,'" *La Prensa Gráfica*, 15 March 1993.

swallow." Everyone had always known that, "And so why delay this until 'an opportune moment' if the dynamics of the process say that this is the best moment?" Indeed, the truth was the best way to honor the suffering Salvadorans had experienced, though the editors did recognize that it would never be a complete truth, or a flawless one.²⁷ Nor did Calderón Sol see much point in not naming names, as long as there was enough evidence to support it; to support his argument, he reminded Salvadorans of Jesus' statement that "the truth will set you free."²⁸ Commentator Hermann W. Bruch was also strongly in favor of truth and its salutary effects. It was necessary to know the contents of the report, he wrote, for "internal peace...demands that [conflict] ends with the public disclosure of [that conflict's] black parts." He was sure that after the report was published, all Salvadorans would vow to "never, ever again fall into a similarly repugnant maelstrom of collective behavior." Only in that way, he concluded, would El Salvador achieve lasting peace.²⁹

The "Whole Truth"

When it became clear that the truth would be neither delayed nor incomplete in the way that Cristiani wished, the discourse shifted, from undermining the work of the Truth Commission while declaring that some kind of truth was necessary, to undermining the work of truth itself by declaring that what El Salvador really needed was amnesty. A similar refrain had been heard in relation to the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional, but those voices had hardly challenged the work of truth. In early 1993, affirmations substituting amnesty and *perdón* for truth in the recipe for reconciliation and non-repetition became more focused, and more frequent. In January 1993, in the days leading up to the first anniversary of the signing of the final Peace Accord, Calderón Sol stated that reconciliation was only possible through complete amnesty.³⁰ This is in stark contrast to his declaration of 11 months earlier that, "It is not possible that these bloody acts [i.e. the FMLN's assassination of mayors] remain unpunished."³¹

While a handful of other conservative figures waffled on the usefulness of truth and amnesty, most repeated the sentiments Cristiani expressed in January 1992 in support of the Ley

²⁷ Editorial, "Lo que se busca con la verdad," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 3 March 1993.

²⁸ "Que se publique Informe de la Verdad pide Calderón Sol," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 11 March 1993; "Presidente de ARENA demanda publicar informe Comisión de la Verdad," *Diario Latino*, 3 March 1993.

²⁹ Hermann W. Bruch, "La verdad: estamos listos para recibirla?" *La Prensa Gráfica*, 7 March 1993.

³⁰ "Sólo con una amnistía general se puede reconciliar sociedad," *El Diario de Hoy*, 12 January 1993.

³¹ "Comisión deberá investigar los asesinatos de alcaldes," *El Diario de Hoy*, 13 February 1992.

de Reconciliation Nacional, comments he repeated with greater force the night before the presentation of *De la Locura a la Esperanza*. He stated that *perdón* and amnesty were the best course for El Salvador to follow. In a message broadcast on radio and television and then printed in newspapers, Cristiani proposed amnesty and called for "mutual *perdón*." He did not deny that truth and the report, with all the "limitations" it might contain, were important; but, he said, "it is time to *perdonar*." To this end, and to make it so the report "produced the fruits of reunification for which it was conceived," he proposed a "general and absolute" amnesty.³² Like the 1992 Ley de Reconciliación Nacional, the Ley de Amnistía was rooted in the idea that "sweeping, absolute, and unconditional amnesty" was essential if El Salvador were to achieve reconciliation.³³ This was how lawmakers, led by Cristiani and ARENA, increasingly described the work of amnesty. The Mexico Accords had tasked truth with working toward reconciliation, but by March 1993 it was clear to conservatives that truth, at least the truth in *De la Locura a la Esperanza*, which was certainly not *their* truth, was actually working against reconciliation. Thus, repeating much of the discourse surrounding the limited 1992 amnesty, Cristiani and his allies called for absolute amnesty. Amnesty, and not truth, would lead to reconciliation.

A Partial Truth II

In the week before the 1993 Amnesty Law was passed, while Cristiani promoted amnesty, *perdón*, and *olvido* as working in favor of reconciliation and non-repetition, he and many others also sought to discredit the truth the Commission had revealed—the regime of truth which focused on the military's violations and, if accepted, would help Salvadorans distinguish between truths and lies. Conservatives, thus, attacked truth and the Commission from two sides: not only was amnesty a better way to achieve reconciliation, but, in any case, the truth described in *De la Locura a la Esperanza* was not really true. While some had specific complaints about the Truth Commission,³⁴ ARENA's Gloria Salguero Gross and others criticized the Report for generally being partial. This can be seen in her comments in support of the 1993 Amnesty Law.

³² "Perdón mutuo y amnistía total propone Cristiani," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 15 March 1993; "Mensaje del señor presidente de la República, Licenciado Alfredo Cristiani, con respeto al Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 16 March 1993.

³³ Ley de Amnistía General para la Consolidación de la Paz, Decreto N.486 (1993).

³⁴ See, for example, "A la conciencia nacional e internacional ARENA," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 18 March 1993, paid ad; Lisandro Antonio Manzano, "La ofensiva 'Hasta el tope' del 1989," *El Diario de Hoy*, 1 April 1993; "Categórico rechazo hizo anoche la FA al Informe," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 24 March 1993; "Identifican a masacrados por FMLN," *El Diario de Hoy*, 15 April 1993.

As the *La Prensa Gráfica* headline declared, she stated that the amnesty would "correct holes and errors" in the report.³⁵ But the report was also partial in the sense of being biased. Commentator Hermann W. Bruch, for example, who had lauded the work that truth did at the beginning of March, had changed his mind by the end of the month, at least in regard to the specific truth of " 'the truth commission' " report. The report, he said, exhibited a "lack of balance, impartiality, [and] ethics."³⁶ The former commander of the First Infantry Brigade, Francisco Elena Fuentes, had no doubt that the report was partial, and his comments about the "so-called 'truth commission' "—the "terrible" Truth Commission—and its report bring together many different types of criticism. Elena Fuentes said that the Commission, "made up of foreigners who lent their ears to groups related to the subversion [i.e. human rights organizations], presented a partial report which clearly tramples on the sovereignty of a people like ours." The report was "absurd and false" and those mentioned in the report were the victims of slander. Elena Fuentes, it must be said, as *El Diario de Hoy* did, was accused of participating in the plot to kill the Jesuits. His response to this was that he was only defending his country.³⁷ The Commissioners, it seems, had not taken the advice they had been given about being impartial and about which crimes to investigate.

The editors of *La Prensa Gráfica* were very clear that the Truth Commission had only revealed a sample of the truth, and a "crude" one at that.³⁸ They had, of course, good reason to speak of a sample of the truth. The Truth Commission discussed only 32 cases in depth and, in addition to a statistical breakdown of responsibility, simply provided overviews of the general types of violations each side had committed during the war. The report and the truth it contained certainly were partial in the sense that they were incomplete, for how could the Commission have found the whole truth of 12 years of war in the few short months the Mexico Accord gave it to investigate? So when conservatives (with reason, in this sense) criticized the incompleteness of the report, were they, at root, calling for more truth? When Vice President Francisco Merino said that the conclusions were "poorly-timed, imprecise, and incomplete" since they did not identify those responsible for all of the war's 75,000 casualties,³⁹ was he actually demanding that

³⁵ "Con la amnistía se corrigen vacíos y errores del Informe," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 29 March 1993.

³⁶ Hermann W. Bruch, "Una verdad que no es seria, deja de ser verdad," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 28 March 1993.

³⁷ "Dice Helena [sic] Fuentes: Comisión se prestó a juego de izquierda para destruir F.A.," *El Diario de Hoy*, 2 April 1993.

³⁸ Editorial, "La verdad: el adecuado tratamiento," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 17 March 1993.

³⁹ "Gobierno analiza situación de militares involucrados en el Caso Jesuitas," *Diario Latino*, 19 March 1993.

the truth of all those deaths be revealed and the perpetrators named? Was he rejecting President Cristiani's call that the perpetrators not be named? Given the work truth was tasked with in the Mexico Accord, was this some sort of reaffirmation of truth's reconciliatory powers? Clearly not. Those on the right would likely have been satisfied with a partial-incomplete truth if it had reflected *their* truth about the war. And Cristiani's call that the report not name names is clear evidence that such an incomplete report would not have been entirely unwelcome. But the report was incomplete in a different way; it was incomplete because it did not include as many of the FMLN's crimes as conservatives were convinced the FMLN had committed. And so, in addition to being incomplete, the report was biased. Indeed, the truth the Truth Commission revealed was partial-incomplete *because* it was partial-biased, a bias which was, perhaps, the result of the fact that, as Elena Fuentes said, the commissioners were foreigners who listened to subversives. (Surely it could not be true that the "terrorists" of the FMLN had committed only 5% of the violations!) Thus the partial-incomplete truth Cristiani and others had promoted the previous week was quite distinct from the partial-incomplete truth revealed on 15 March. In addition to being incomplete in different ways, the second incomplete truth (i.e., the Truth Commission's truth) would most certainly not work to prevent a repetition of the past and foster reconciliation, as will be seen, whereas, in the eyes of those who called for the perpetrators not to be named, apparently the first would. (Indeed, this incomplete truth would have promoted reconciliation even more if it had also been a delayed truth.) It seems that whether complete or incomplete, biased or unbiased, poorly-timed or delayed, truth is temperamental, slippery even, contributing to reconciliation at one moment and working to open the wounds of the very recent past in the next. Perhaps, rather than trusting truth with the important task of ensuring non-repetition, amnesty would be best?

The editors of *La Prensa Gráfica* and many others agreed. Now that the "exemplary sample" of the truth was known, to continue "stirring up the waters...is inconvenient for the [peace] process and for the country," they wrote. Thus, a "total and absolute amnesty," passed as soon as possible, would be best.⁴⁰ But it was not just journalists and politicians who wished for amnesty. According to Cristiani, Salvadorans did, too. Now that the report had been published, it was clear that it did not correspond to the desire of the "majority of Salvadorans," which was for *perdón* and *olvido*. To further explain the need for amnesty, he pointed out that the report

⁴⁰ Editorial, "La verdad: el adecuado tratamiento," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 17 March 1993.

contained merely a sample of the violence; "it is important to see what we will do about erasing, eliminating, and forgetting the entirety of the past," he declared, for it is not "fair" that some might have to face the consequences of their actions while others, "for the simple fact that they were not part of the sample," do not.⁴¹ The report's incompleteness was, thus, the result of some sort of statistical problem, where the sample used to reflect a larger trend was not representative. Having established that the report was incomplete and that he was interested in doing the right thing, Cristiani urged Salvadorans to support a "general and absolute" amnesty to "turn this painful page of our history and to look for a better future for our country." Interestingly, he also reaffirmed his belief that the report should serve to "build the El Salvador in which we all want to live: an El Salvador at peace, moving forward, and free."⁴² The logic of Cristiani's thinking seems flawed. How exactly could the report help build the new El Salvador if all of the past was to be erased, eliminated, and forgotten? Here, Cristiani seemed stuck in a framework, dictated by the Peace Accords, which insists that the Truth Commission and its work were important for El Salvador's future. Almost everything he says contradicts this, but he seems unable to actually say those words. He seems unable to escape this framework, despite the glaringly obvious fact that he disagrees with it. For Cristiani, neither truth, nor the incomplete and biased truth the Truth Commission gave voice to, would work to prevent repetition and foster reconciliation. Rather, amnesty, *perdón*, and *olvido* would do this work.

Unsurprisingly, the military was also critical of the report and doubted that it would contribute to reconciliation. Soon after the Ley de Amnistía was passed, the Armed Forces placed an ad in daily newspapers calling the report "unfair, incomplete, illegal, unethical, biased, and insolent." In interviews, Minister of Defense Ponce said that, instead of "heal[ing] the wounds" of the past and "support[ing] the process of moral and material reconstruction," the report was clearly an attempt to "destroy...the social peace." Far from fostering reconciliation, the report "creates an atmosphere contrary to the spirit of harmony and the reunification of the Salvadoran family."⁴³ Conservative commentator Hermann Bruch echoed this point. He argued that the Report had done exactly the opposite of what it had been intended to do. Rather than

⁴¹ "Mensaje dirigido a la nación por el excelentísimo señor presidente de la República, Licenciado Félix Alfredo Cristiani el día 18 de marzo 1993," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 19 March 1993.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ "Categórico rechazo hizo anoche la FA al Informe," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 24 March 1993; "Fuerza Armada critica informe Comisión de la Verdad," *Diario Latino*, 24 March 1993; Fuerza Armada de El Salvador, "Posición de la Fuerza Armada de El Salvador ante el Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad," *Diario Latino*, 24 March 1993, paid ad.

contributing to conciliation, as he described it, it had "managed to aggravate the mood" of many Salvadorans.⁴⁴ Rather than truth, the editors of *La Prensa Gráfica* assured readers that only amnesty would "stabilize the national spirit, with an eye toward reconciliation."⁴⁵ Not only was the truth partial, but it was actually working against reconciliation; to correct this, amnesty was necessary.

That amnesty, *perdón*, and *olvido*, and not truth, will lead to reconciliation is El Salvador's dominant discourse. Since early 1993, conservatives have repeated it over and over again, most clearly and often in discussions that have taken place since then about revoking the amnesty. These discussions most often take place in response to legal proceedings in the Inter-American system⁴⁶ or to reject attempts to have the law revoked. Thus, the formula that amnesty fosters reconciliation and that repealing it would open old wounds reappeared, for example, in 2000 when the Corte Suprema de Justicia (CSJ, Supreme Court of Justice) declared the Amnesty Law constitutional,⁴⁷ and again in 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2010 when the FMLN, the Oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado de San Salvador (Tutela Legal, Archbishop of San Salvador's Legal Aid Office), the FMLN once again, a UN Working Group, and the UN Human Rights Committee, respectively, proposed that the law be revoked.⁴⁸ There is no doubt that the Amnesty Law is a memory knot. It is, as Stern wrote, a "sit[e] where the social body screams." It "evinces a power of almost sacred connection to the past, and consequently stir[s] up and project[s] polemics about memory and amnesia."⁴⁹ In El Salvador, there is less discussion about memory and much more about truth and forgetting, though, as in Guatemala, and given Stern's

⁴⁴ Hermann W. Bruch, "Una verdad que no es seria, deja de ser verdad," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 28 March 1993.

⁴⁵ Editorial, "La amnistía es oportuna," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 23 March 1993.

⁴⁶ For example, in 2000 when the CIDH found the Salvadoran state responsible for Romero's assassination and recommended the amnesty be eliminated. (Omar Cabrera, "Comisión resuelve en caso Monseñor Romero," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 7 January 2000; "No tuve que ver ni en ese ni otro hecho sangriento", Alfredo Cristiani, "Diario Latino, 29 March 2000; Mauricio Granillo Barrera "El régimen interamericano de derechos humanos en El Salvador," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 31 March 2000.)

⁴⁷ Edward Gutiérrez and Roxana Hueza, "Constitucional Ley de Amnistía," *El Diario de Hoy*, 4 October 2000.

⁴⁸ Roberto Alas, "Debatén petición contra Ley de Amnistía de 1993," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 22 November 2002; Ernesto Mejía, "Presidente Saca rechaza derogar Ley de Amnistía," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 9 September 2004; "Saca no avala derogar amnistía," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 14 April 2005; Bernardo Valiente, "Mandatario defiende la Ley de Amnistía," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 9 February 2007; Bernardo Valiente, "Saca reitera que no derogará Ley Amnistía," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 16 February 2007; "Veteranos del Ejército contra derogar amnistía," *El Diario de Hoy*, 30 October 2010.

⁴⁹ Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 120-3

description of memory as "the meaning we attach to experience,"⁵⁰ memory and truth are not so different, as will be seen in the next chapter.

The continued dominance of a discourse which insists on amnesty and *olvido* can be seen in 2011 when the memory knot of the amnesty became tangled with the memory knot of the 1989 Jesuit massacre. The explosion of the amnesty discourse was a result of a case in Spain against officers for the assassination of the Jesuits and their collaborators; INTERPOL issued an international arrest warrant.⁵¹ Amidst complaints that the case in Spain violated sovereignty and declarations that it had already been tried came declarations that the amnesty was a key component of the peace and had been essential in the process of reconciliation.⁵² The ad ARENA took out in *El Diario de Hoy* in mid-August is representative. ARENA declared, "the cornerstone of the peace process is centered on *perdón* and *olvido*, so as to make way for the meeting and reconciliation of the Salvadoran family." They called on "political institutions and civil society organizations not to politicize acts which have already been overcome, nor to open healed wounds, to respect the spirit of the Peace Accords and to continue to build the social harmony which El Salvador demands."⁵³ In discussions about the Amnesty Law, the social body is certainly screaming, either because old wounds—the wounds from the war—had healed but were being torn open again by calls to revoke the amnesty, or because, for the human rights community, those wounds are still open after 20 or 30 years and only revoking the amnesty, knowing the truth, and attaining justice would help them heal. In moments like this, conservatives and human rights activists scream very loudly and insist that their recipe for social peace is best.

⁵⁰ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 105-6.

⁵¹ For more information, see the Center for Justice and Accountability, "The Jesuit Massacre Case," accessed 3 March 2013, <http://www.cja.org/article.php?list=type&type=84>.

⁵² See, for example, ARENA, *La Prensa Gráfica*, 1 June 2011, paid ad and ASVEM, *La Prensa Gráfica*, 8 June 2011, paid ad.

⁵³ ARENA, *El Diario de Hoy*, 11 August 2011, paid ad. See also, Ricardo Flores, "Tratan de deslegitimar los Acuerdos de Paz a su vez la Ley de Amnistía," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 4 June 2011; Fernando Romero and Amílcar Mejía, "Militares veteranos, al margen de la polémica," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 2 August 2011; and Editorial, "Estamos revueltos de nuevo por el tema de las culpas," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 16 August 2011. Not all conservatives rejected truth in 2011. See, for example, Editorial, "Ante tanto problema, se atiza hoy una antigua polémica," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 3 June 2011.

Amnesty and *Olvido*

Amnesty, as Ricoeur pointed out, is little more than forced forgetting; it is forgetting dictated by law. This is certainly how it was understood in El Salvador. Though connections were made between forgetting and the 1992 Ley de Reconciliación Nacional, such as when Justice Minister René Hernández Valiente described it as "*perdón* and *olvido*,"⁵⁴ the equation of amnesty and *olvido* really came to dominate in early 1993. Cristiani, of course, had stated that what Salvadorans really wanted was *perdón* and *olvido*, adding that the entirety of the past must be erased, eliminated, and forgotten. Others agreed. ARENA's Roberto Angulo, for example, described the Amnesty as a "step toward reconciliation" because it granted *perdón* and *olvido* for what had happened during the war, a comment conservative analyst Kirio Waldo Salgado agreed with.⁵⁵ For his part, the PCN's Marco Valladares explained that the amnesty implied forgetting a crime so as to "reestablish harmony and social concord."⁵⁶ Thus, forgetting worked to promote reconciliation; it was a step in the right direction.

The connection between amnesty and *olvido*, however, is most clear in statements human rights, victims, and like-minded organizations made against amnesty, about both the 1992 Ley de Reconciliación Nacional and the 1993 Amnesty Law. These organizations were, perhaps, just being etymologically correct or repeating how Cristiani described the Amnesty. Yet when those not tied to the military or ARENA made comparisons between amnesty and *olvido*, they were most certainly using *olvido* to criticize the amnesties, positioning both as opposite to truth and as working against reconciliation. Amnesty and *olvido* were instead working in favor of impunity, identified by many as one of the causes of the war.⁵⁷ If the amnesties were perpetuating one of the causes of the war, then how could amnesty also be working to prevent repetition?

As part of the Instituto de Estudios Jurídicos de El Salvador (IEJES, Institute of Legal Studies of El Salvador), Félix Ulloa, whose father had served as rector of the Universidad de El Salvador (UES, University of El Salvador) before his assassination in 1980, was opposed to the form of the 1992 amnesty. He was not, however, against *perdón* itself, as long as it was granted once the truth was known and justice served. He wrote that ARENA's attempt to push through a

⁵⁴ "Amnistían 80 subversivos dice Hernández V.," *El Diario de Hoy*, 12 February 1992.

⁵⁵ "Podría aprobar hoy o lunes la Amnistía," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 20 March 1993; Kirio Waldo Salgado M., "La masacre de Nueva Trinidad," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 26 April 1993.

⁵⁶ "Porqué fue aprobada Amnistía explica PCN," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 30 March 1993.

⁵⁷ Conservatives and the human rights community had fundamentally different interpretations of the causes of the war. While the human rights community pointed to dictatorship, injustice, and repression, conservatives blamed international communism.

"general and automatic" amnesty, one which would be little more than *perdón* and *olvido*, was a slap in the face to those who had hoped for justice. It is impossible, he added, that those who had committed "horrendous crimes" during the war go unpunished, "sheltered by the noble and legitimate desire for national reconciliation."⁵⁸ The Comité de Madres y Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos y Asesinados Políticos de El Salvador "Monseñor Óscar Arnulfo Romero" (Co-Madres, Committee of Mothers and Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared and Political Victims "Monseñor Óscar Arnulfo Romero") rejected the Amnesty for similar reasons, arguing that amnesty, which only meant "*borrón y cuenta nueva*"⁵⁹ and *perdón* and *olvido*, would continue impunity. From their point of view, they could only *perdonar* after justice had been done.⁶⁰ The Comité de Familiares de Víctimas de Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos "Marianella García Villas" (CODEFAM, Committee of Relatives of Victims of Human Rights Violations "Marianella García Villas") spoke against the 1993 Amnesty using similar language. Not only was the Amnesty an attempt to "throw a mantle of *olvido*" over the crimes committed during the war, but it continued the impunity which had "dominated for two decades and makes space for death squads to be resurrected and for human rights violations to continue." Rather than amnesty, they called for truth and justice.⁶¹ The Centro para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos "Madeleine Lagadec" (CPDH, Center for the Promotion of Human Rights "Madeleine Lagadec") took a more combative stance, declaring that "the usual suspects" are against truth and justice. "They want," according to the CDPH, "to make the people believe that reconciliation is the same as *olvido* (as in their day, they wanted to make us believe that Peace was the same as the Peace of the Cemeteries [sic]—full of dead opponents)."⁶²

For these organizations, as for many conservatives, amnesty meant *perdón* and *olvido*. Yet whereas Cristiani believed that these would benefit El Salvador and help lead to reconciliation, human rights groups saw all three as undermining the work truth was meant to do. An amnesty not based on truth cannot lead to reconciliation, nor can it work to ensure non-

⁵⁸ Instituto de Estudios Jurídico de El Salvador, "Justicia y democracia, los vectores de la paz," *Diario Latino*, 22 January 1992, paid ad.

⁵⁹ That is, "wiping the slate clean"

⁶⁰ Co-Madres, *Diario Latino*, 27 March 1993, paid ad. Monseñor Arturo Rivera Damas agreed with Co-Madres about the mantle of forgetting in the case of Romero. ("Arzobispo critica al gobierno de echar manto de olvido a crímenes," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 22 March 1993.)

⁶¹ CODEFAM "Marianella García Villas," "Amnistia general: ofensa a la dignidad del pueblo salvadoreño," *Diario Latino*, 23 March 1993, paid ad.

⁶² CDPH "Madeleine Lagadec," "¡¡Bienvenidos informe Comisión de la Verdad y pastores por la paz!!" *Diario Latino*, 19 March 1993, paid ad.

repetition. The idea that truth is the basis for reconciliation and non-repetition is the framework within which human rights organizations and those with similar outlooks have operated since the final Peace was signed, and it will be discussed in greater depth below. But it is clear from these few statements that two fundamentally different ideas and discourses related to truth and amnesty and the relationship between these and reconciliation exist in El Salvador. Cristiani and those of a similar mind came, between January 1992 and March 1993, to declare that truth—that is, the partial truth revealed in the Truth Commission report—would lead to continued and even increased division in Salvadoran society. The remedy, they argued, was amnesty, *perdón*, and *olvido*. Amnesty would perform the work that truth had been mandated to perform in the México Accord: reconciliation and non-repetition. This is El Salvador's dominant discursive framework. Members of and those connected to human rights, victims, and more progressive organizations employ a counterdiscourse that rejects amnesty as the sole ingredient in the recipe for reconciliation and non-repetition. They believe, for the most part, that amnesty could be the final step in the long process of reconstructing the social fabric. But before amnesty and *perdón* can be granted, the truth must be known and justice must be done. Throughout the post-Peace era, they have argued that reconciling El Salvador is the work that truth does. It is not a task for amnesty alone, and it most certainly is not something that can be achieved with the heavy dose of forgetting which conservatives understand amnesty to involve.

The different formulas for reconciliation and how it would and will be achieved are certainly imagined as being diametrically opposed, most certainly because when conservatives spoke of amnesty as *perdón* and *olvido*, *perdón* and *olvido* were just as sweeping, absolute, and unconditional as the 1993 Amnesty itself. There was no space for truth, and certainly not for trials. Yet there is nothing in the two Amnesty Laws that says, for example, that truth cannot precede *perdón*. The amnesties seem to have only legal effects; lawmakers did not insist that the war or its crimes be forgotten. That the laws were described as ways to forget the entirety of the past is telling, and points to a paradox of amnesty in El Salvador. By passing the amnesties, conservatives wanted all of the war to be forgotten. Yet the crimes included in the Truth Commission report are precisely the crimes most discussed in the public sphere, and more specifically in the conservative media. The Amnesty Law did not, despite Cristiani, lead to a forgetting of the whole past. The Law has, despite its unconstitutionality, certainly prevented trials from taking place in El Salvador, but the most horrific of the crimes for which the

military's and ARENA's heroes (i.e. Domingo Monterrosa and Roberto D'Aubuisson) are responsible are known and occasionally present in public debate, even if the perpetrators are not mentioned in mainstream media. These include the 1980 assassination of Romero, the 1989 Jesuit massacre, and the 1981 El Mozote massacre. They are, of course, present because human rights organizations refuse to allow them to be forgotten; they refuse to allow either the right's silence or version of the past to be the only truth present in the public sphere. Human rights organizations refuse, as well, to accept amnesty and legislated forgetting. Thus, it is most often in relation to the possible revoking of the Amnesty Law when the past enters the (conservative) present, and when the right and their opponents most clearly insist on the truth of their own truth, and insist that it is either through amnesty or truth that reconciliation will be achieved and non-repetition best guaranteed.

The Need for Truth

While Cristiani and his allies came to view amnesty and forgetting as working for reconciliation and non-repetition, the human rights community promoted a counterdiscourse based on truth. Truth, they argued (and continue to argue), works to reconcile society. Only when truth is known and justice done, can amnesty, but not forgetting, be granted. They do not reject amnesty completely, but see it as a final step in a long process. *De la Locura a la Esperanza*, unsurprisingly, championed the work that truth does to promote reconciliation and prevent repetition and insisted on the truth of their truth, rejecting criticisms about partiality. The Commissioners wrote,

The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, as the oath goes. The overall truth and the specific truth, the radiant but quiet truth. The whole and its parts, in other words, the bright light shone onto a surface to illuminate it and the parts of this same surface lit up case by case, regardless of the identity of the perpetrators, always in the search for lessons that would contribute to reconciliation and to abolishing such patterns of behavior in the new society.

Learning the truth and strengthening and tempering the determination to find it out; putting an end to impunity and cover-up; settling political and social differences by means of agreement instead of violent action: these are the creative consequences of an analytical search for the truth.⁶³

⁶³ Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador, *From Madness to Hope: The 12-year war in El Salvador: Report of the Commission on the Truth for El Salvador*, 1993, <http://www.usip.org/resources/truth-commission-el-salvador>, 4.

The truth was thus a cure for all of El Salvador's ills, and the Commissioners were clear in their belief that the truth in the report was *the* truth of the war. In addition to their comments about the "whole truth," the Commissioners stated that the report "records the acts of violence that occurred repeatedly during the 12 years of war"; the report, they added, is the "background to the country's recent painful history."⁶⁴ There is little room in these descriptions for other versions of the war, and why should there be? The Peace Accords created the Truth Commission because "it was necessary that the 'complete truth be known,' " and the commissioners believed they had accomplished this task within the time limit established.⁶⁵ Their confidence in the truth the report revealed can be seen in the following declaration:

Now, the whole truth cannot be told without naming names. After all, the Commission was not asked to write an academic report on El Salvador, it was asked to investigate and describe exceptionally important acts of violence and to recommend measures to prevent the repetition of such acts. This task cannot be performed in the abstract, suppressing information (for instance, the names of persons responsible for such acts) where there is reliable testimony available.... Not to name names would be to reinforce the very impunity to which the Parties instructed the Commission to put an end.⁶⁶

For Cristiani, before he decided that it was the work of amnesty to promote reconciliation, naming names (and so revealing a complete truth) was understood as working against reconciliation. For the Truth Commission, exactly the opposite was true. To reveal a partial truth, a truth that was not whole, would only serve to perpetuate impunity, which the Commission had been created to eliminate. For them, the report's truth was neither biased nor incomplete. The report was simply the record of the violence committed during the war. Though it may have been a sample of the violations committed, it was certainly a representative sample that revealed the truth of the war, and established a regime of truth; this truth should serve to foster reconciliation and prevent repetition, just as the Mexico Accord had mandated. The human rights community, including the Jesuits at the UCA, the non-governmental Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador (CDHES, Human Rights Commission of El Salvador), the Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas" (IDHUCA, Human Rights Institute of the UCA), and the Centro de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho (CESPAD,

⁶⁴ Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador, *From Madness to Hope*, 175 and 178-9.

⁶⁵ Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador, *From Madness to Hope*, 17-8.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Center of Studies for the Application of Law),⁶⁷ repeated the Mexico Accord and Truth Commission's support of the work that truth does and spoke out against Cristiani's vision of amnesty and forgetting. Their argument is representative of the discourse those opposed to the Amnesty use to explain how best reconciliation and non-repetition can be achieved. It must be



Photo taken by author. 24 April 2012.

noted that the Jesuits and the IDHUCA are the elite of the human rights community. It is also certainly true that much of what they and other organizations write and say do not reach many Salvadorans. But their rejection of amnesty and support for the work of truth are also at least occasionally embraced by less "elite" individuals and groups, and the truth discourse can reach more than those who read newspapers or other publications. The truth discourse also makes an appearance from time to time on the streets of San Salvador. Visible in April 2012 on one of the streets near the busy MetroCentro shopping plaza were the words "Ni perdón ni olvido," above. Though the phrase was completely lacking in context, it seems likely that it was a rejection of the Amnesty Law, given how often the Law has been described as *perdón* and *olvido*. Also, not too

⁶⁷ CESPAD later became the Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho (FESPAD, Foundation for the Study of the Application of Law).



"Peace requires four conditions: truth, justice, love, liberty."

Photo by author. 24 April 2012.

far away, peace-themed murals had been painted on the concrete walls surrounding the UES. One declared, "Peace requires four conditions: truth, justice, love, liberty." Another proclaimed, "There will not be peace without justice and equity." Thus there are more popular echoes of the truth discourse that likely reach more Salvadorans than ads or articles in newspapers. And certainly, paint on concrete is a more durable and long-lasting medium than newsprint.

The Jesuits at the UCA believed fiercely in the Truth Commission's truth, as well as in the work that truth does, and argued that amnesty works against reconciliation. In the UCA's weekly publication in *Diario (Co-)Latino*, they spoke quite forcefully in favor of the truth and against the passage of a hasty amnesty. To pass Cristiani's proposed amnesty would "[not] help prevent what happened [in the past and] which today horrifies us so much from happening again." Nor would Cristiani's amnesty lead to reconciliation, "given that it is directed exclusively toward burying the truth report along with its recommendations."⁶⁸ Amnesty, thus, works to facilitate the repetition of a horrific past. Not revealing the truth about the past, which was what

⁶⁸ UCA, "El informe de la verdad," *Realidad Nacional* 1, No. 39 (1993).

Cristiani proposed with his call for amnesty and *olvido*, created the risk of "instability and confrontation."⁶⁹ CESPAD also rejected Cristiani's amnesty because it would keep "the bitterness which impunity produces" alive. It would not, they insisted, lead to reconciliation. Instead, they proposed a conditional amnesty, one which began with the acceptance of guilt, followed by asking for *perdón* and promising to never again repeat whatever crime that individual had committed. This kind of amnesty, "amnesty-contrition" and not "amnesty-gift," was the only kind which would lead the country toward *perdón* and reconciliation.⁷⁰ The Jesuits and CESPAD rejected amnesty, imposed *perdón*, and forgetting in favor of the complete truth and justice, and then amnesty or *perdón*. This was the only way to achieve reconciliation. The CDHES repeated much of the same reasoning in relation to what would become the 1993 Amnesty Law. The "next logical step," they wrote after the Truth Commission report was published, was not amnesty. The Commission's report "sets us on the path toward a new stage: that of justice, which should be sealed with *perdón*...and not by official forgetting."⁷¹ The CDHES, IDHUCA, and others were not against amnesty per se. They were, however, against Cristiani's amnesty since it sought to promote forgetting without the perpetrators' identities being known and before trials were carried out. It sought, therefore, to "impose an 'easy' forgetting of the atrocities" committed in the war.⁷²

The truth discourse appears frequently in ads in conservative/mainstream and leftist newspapers, in articles and interviews in *Diario (Co-)Latino* and sometimes in mainstream papers, and in organizations' and institutions' own publications. The human rights community called for truth and justice as the necessary prerequisites for *perdón* fairly regularly, thereby maintaining the relevance of the past in the present and challenging the right's silence about it. An indication of which truth ought to be known is clear in the CDHES' introduction to their re-publication of the pro-FMLN Equipo Maíz's popular version of *De la Locura a la Esperanza*. The fact that the CDHES, and in particular the CDHES' Centro de la Memoria Histórica "Marianella García Villas" (Center of Historical Memory "Marianella García Villas"), re-published a popular version with drawings and more accessible (i.e., less legal) language is significant in and of itself, but they also repeated the discourse regarding truth and non-

⁶⁹ UCA, "Cercano informe de la Comisión de la Verdad," *Realidad Nacional* 1, No. 38 (1993).

⁷⁰ CESPAD, "Amnistía: una tesis alternativa: perdonar a quienes pidan perdón," *Diario Latino*, 16 March 1993, paid ad. The same ad was published in *La Prensa Gráfica* the next day.

⁷¹ CDHES, "Amnistía: una tesis alternativa, perdonar a quienes pidan perdón," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 20 March 1993, paid ad.

⁷² Sínoda Luterana Salvadoreño, Socorro Jurídico Cristiano "Monseñor Romero," CDHES, IDHUCA, "El perdón no se impone por decreto," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 24 March 1993, paid ad.

repetition. Indeed, one of the main objectives of the Centro de la Memoria Histórica is to make the truth known.⁷³

Though the reality is not so black and white, this chapter places the conservative discourse which had developed by 1993 and was based on a rejection of the Truth Commission report and a celebration of amnesty and *olvido* in opposition to the discourse of the human rights community, which argues that truth, justice, and then *perdón* work for reconciliation and non-repetition. Elizabeth Jelin and Stern suggest that the memory/forgetting binary is inaccurate. Instead, those who insist on memory when confronted with those who insist on forgetting or silence, and vice versa, are really talking about truths, or different memories which are imagined as truths. The discourse in El Salvador which situates truth as counter to amnesty and forgetting is more in line with what Jelin and Stern see as a more appropriate way to discuss the issue of memory. It makes sense to demand that the truth of the past be known when others are even more loudly demanding that the past be forgotten, that the wounds of the past not be reopened, that the perpetrators not be held responsible, and that Salvadorans look to the future.

The war was about power and what the future of El Salvador would be like; when the Peace Accords were signed, both sides agreed to fight about these things at the ballot box. But, as in previous decades, the post-Peace also features a discursive battle about truth, a struggle between truth and amnesty/*olvido*, a struggle which also has to do with what is best for the country's future. For nearly 20 years, conservatives have dominated this debate, insisting that only amnesty and *olvido* would lead to peace. In that time, those who rejected this discourse loudly and insistently declared that amnesty and *olvido* would most certainly not lead to peace, and that lasting peace was only possible if built on a foundation of truth. The pro-truth discourse received some additional support with the 2009 election of the FMLN to the presidency (which will be explored in greater detail in Chapters Five and Six), but the most significant change to the public discourse is perhaps the Supreme Court's 2014 decision recognizing the victims' right to truth. In a case about the San Francisco Angulo massacre, and quoting various Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (Inter-American Human Rights Commission) and Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH, Inter-American Human Rights Court) rulings to the same effect, the Court also pointed to truth (specifically, the truth about one of the army's

⁷³ CDHES, *De la Locura a la Esperanza: version popular* (CDHES: San Salvador, 2003).

massacres) as essential to combating impunity and guaranteeing non-repetition.⁷⁴ Though the short and long-term effects of this decision remain unclear, that an important and powerful state institution—the same that had previously upheld the constitutionality of the Amnesty Law, and which began to review the law again in 2013—has finally made a declaration which echoes human rights organizations' discourse points to the fragility of the right's seemingly dominant discursive framework, and indeed any discursive framework's apparent dominance.

⁷⁴ Sala de lo Constitucional de la Corte Suprema de Justicia. San Salvador, 10 February 2014, http://perso.unifr.ch/derechopenal/assets/files/jurisprudencia/j_20140408_01.pdf.

Chapter Five
El Salvador: Memory/Historical Memory/Truth/History

"Memoria historica"

-A este hijo de puta
lo vamos a ir a traer,
sindicalista de mierda,
-dijo una voz.

-Lo vamos a reventar,
se escuchó más allá entre las sombras.

-Lo vamos a desaparecer,
repuso
otro
en la penumbra.

--Mario Castrillo¹

Discussions about memory, so present in Guatemala, are not entirely absent in El Salvador. And, indeed, talking about memory makes good sense. How else can the right's open and frequent calls for amnesty and forgetting be rejected if not by demanding memory? Though Stern, Jelin, and others have argued otherwise, memory certainly seems to be the antithesis of forgetting. And there are increasingly frequent discussions of memory and historical memory in the Salvadoran public sphere, especially by, though not limited to, members of the human rights community. As in Guatemala, those in El Salvador who talk about memory or historical memory point out that remembering will prevent repetition of the past.²

Those with ties to the Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA, Nationalist Republican Alliance) or the military agree that remembering the past will prevent repetition. Yet if the depths of what lies below the surface discourse are explored, if what Foucault called the "the half silent murmur of another discourse"³ is fully given voice, it becomes clear that the right's support of memory is less than whole-hearted. Their calls for memory are often vague and

¹ "Historical Memory." "-This son of a bitch / we're going to get him, / unionist piece of shit, / -one voice said. / - We're going to break him, / was heard from the shadows. / -We're going to disappear him, / replied / another / from the darkness." (Mario Castrillo, "Memoria histórica," 3000: *Suplemento Cultural*, 6 March 1993.)

² Talk of reconciliation is largely, though not completely absent, from the discourse surrounding memory and forgetting. The focus is on "never again."

³ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Routledge, 2002), 31.

weak, while their demands for amnesty and forgetting are clear and strong. Statements in favor of memory are also often paired with a push to forget or lie on a foundation of forgetting; in a manner far less subtle than in Guatemala, conservatives frequently call for memory in one breath and forgetting in the next. As well, conservatives often call for a limited memory—limited to very specific events of the war and limited in terms of what remembering will achieve. That is, remembering certain crimes will *only* help to ensure non-repetition. It will serve no other purpose, such as inspiring continued struggles for justice or rights.

Conservative discourse about amnesty/*olvido* and memory both leading to non-repetition, however half-hearted their support for memory might be, seems contradictory. Keeping in mind that the "conservative" label homogenizes the members of a group who often disagree on a range of other issues, how can this contradiction be resolved? How can both forgetting *and* memory lead to non-repetition? Conservatives seem to want the "entirety of the past," as Cristiani said, (only some of which was contained in the Truth Commission report) to be forgotten; but they also want particular aspects of the past (many of which were not in the report) to be remembered.⁴ At a very basic level, they want the military's crimes to be forgotten and the crimes of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN, Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front), the impact of which surely also "urgently requires that the public should know the truth,"⁵ to most definitely be remembered. Here, then, is the underlying constant in conservative discourse: a deep criticism and rejection of *De la Locura a la Esperanza*, though the report is rarely mentioned. Instead, it is silenced. Conservatives promote forgetting, via silence and the amnesty, because they view the report as partial. They also promote remembering the FMLN's crimes because the report is partial, because the Commissioners "forgot" (perhaps on purpose) to include the FMLN's crimes, crimes the right believed were very important to remember.

The way conservatives view the past, their motivations for promoting memory, and the way they talk about remembering but in fact hope for forgetting, are best described as monumental. Remembering is, at least in theory, what monuments and the commemorative ceremonies which surround them are supposed to accomplish; yet, as Jeffrey Olick and Joyce

⁴ The human rights community can also be accused of being similarly selective in what they focus on remembering, though highlighting the military's crimes is a more inclusive memory, since the military committed far more violations than the guerrilla.

⁵ "El Salvador: Mexico Peace Agreements—Provisions Creating the Commission on Truth," 27 April 1991, <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/commissions/El%20Salvador-Charter.pdf>.

Robbins point out, monuments are paradoxical, for "once we assign monumental form to a memory, we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember."⁶ James Young, an outspoken critic of traditional, static stone or metal monuments, argues that such monuments provide only the illusion of permanence and of remembering.⁷ Peter Carrier adds that

[a]lthough the transmission of history as an aesthetic medium for mass consumption does fulfill the object of commemoration by 'calling to mind,' it also categorizes and fixes the past in a given form that ritually creates and fulfills an appetite for uncritical information, and thereby renders ineffective the pertinence of the past in the present. It petrifies the past both literally and metaphorically by imposing monolithic form which, ritualized and banalized, is historically redundant and effectively invisible.⁸

Young concludes by declaring, in particular reference to Holocaust memorials and monuments, that "the initial impulse to memorialize events such as the Holocaust may actually spring from an opposite and equal desire to forget them."⁹

Keeping these ideas in mind when thinking about the right's use of the past and their views on remembering, it is possible to see that they want to monumentalize the past so that it no longer matters to the present. Yet rather than do this, rather than erect a physical monument related to the war, the way the rights talks about the importance of remembering the past "assigns monumental form" to the past; they petrify the past, making it "historically redundant and effectively invisible."¹⁰

The human rights community is more whole-hearted in supporting memory and the role it has in preventing repetition. Unlike conservatives, they see memory as actively working for non-repetition, in part because remembering the past implies remembering activism and remembering that the injustices that caused the war persist. For the human rights community, the past is not a monument, built to be forgotten and serving no real purpose in the present. Rather, the past is alive, and it is kept alive by remembering. The past lives and breathes and is highly pertinent to the present; it explains and inspires.

⁶ Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998), 119.

⁷ James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 37 and 47-8.

⁸ Peter Carrier, "Historical Traces of the Present: the Uses of Commemoration," *Historical Reflections* 22, no. 2 (1996): 440.

⁹ Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 5.

¹⁰ Carrier, "Historical Traces of the Present," 440.

Yet what exactly the human rights community means when its members talk about memory or historical memory is often far from clear. The words are often used interchangeably, and are sometimes even used as synonyms for history, as when the right speaks of them. Whereas the right focuses on the FMLN's abuses, as might be expected, the human rights community calls on Salvadorans to remember the military and its proxies' human rights violations. Thus, what human rights organizations want to be remembered is the truth of the Truth Commission, though it is a more complete truth than in the report. That is, they want more than the 32 cases the Commission described in depth to be remembered. This "more," however, is in keeping with the Commission's findings regarding the military's overwhelming responsibility for violations. In their support for memory or historical memory, these organizations and individuals often take their discussions further than the simple repetition of the mantra that the past be remembered so that it never happens again. They see memory as a tool that must very actively be used to help prevent repetition.

Why remember

The idea that memory or remembering work to prevent a repetition of the past was present in the public sphere in El Salvador from early in the post-Peace era, though memory did not dominate the discourse in the same way that forgetting and truth did. Among conservatives, president Cristiani, for example, supported memory in his official welcome to the Pope in February 1996. The president described the visit, John Paul II's second to El Salvador, as the "balm" which will "erase the scars of that tragedy ['the fratricidal confrontation'], which will only be remembered as a historical lesson, so that it never happens again."¹¹ As the layers of meaning are peeled back from Cristiani's words, his apparent support for memory becomes only that, apparent. Cristiani attempts to dictate how and why the past should be remembered, i.e. "only...as a historical lesson so that it never happens again." That is, the past should not be used

¹¹ Evidently forgetting his support for the work that amnesty and not truth does, he also said that the new El Salvador was built on the foundations of a respect for human rights and "guided by truth, liberty, and justice." ("Mensaje de Bienvenida a Su Santidad Juan Pablo II, Pronunciado por el Señor Presidente de la República de El Salvador, Doctor, Armando Calderón Sol," *El Diario de Hoy*, 9 February 1996.) ARENA's René Figueroa took this passivity to another level, stating in 1994 that "we should remember the violence, but only to ask God that the terror never returns to our beloved homeland." Figueroa also removes any responsibility for ensuring non-repetition from human, and even papal, hands, placing it on the shoulders of a power even higher than John Paul II. Memory works neither actively nor passively to prevent repetition; rather, God does. ("Conmemorarán dos años de firma de Acuerdos de Paz," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 16 January 1994.)

to inspire current activism or organizing or to make demands on the present. And the past most certainly should not be used to accuse or lay blame.

Yet even Cristiani's limited call for memory is almost completely undermined by his statement that the Pope's visit will erase the scars of the war. There has been much debate about whether revoking the 1993 Amnesty would reopen the wounds left by the war, or if those wounds had ever healed. By mentioning the scars of the war, Cristiani is repeating his belief that the social body's wounds had, in fact, healed and that only scars remained. In this view, El Salvador was well along the path to national reconciliation. Amnesty, *perdón*, and *olvido*, which Cristiani had assigned to the task of promoting national reconciliation, of healing society, were clearly doing their work well. But for Cristiani, the scars remained, and reminded Salvadorans of the original wound. To celebrate that the Pope's visit would erase the scars is to suggest that this one very tangible reminder of the war (ARENA governments had, after all, refused to construct monuments related to the war, memorials to the victims or to declare a day for the victims) *should* be erased, that the war should be completely forgotten. Cristiani, of course, had very clearly and openly supported forgetting the entirety of the past and even spoke of erasing it. Erasing the scars is, perhaps, the final step in his plan for reconciliation: first the wounds are healed with amnesty, *perdón*, and *olvido*, and then the Pope erases the scars.

Cristiani's support for remembering so as to prevent repetition was based on a foundation of forgetting and a firm belief that oblivion was essential. In his mind, oblivion works toward non-repetition. Taking his calls for remembering at face value, however, as declarations truly in support of memory, it is clear that he does not see memory itself as working for non-repetition. For conservatives, memory is not a tool; it is not something that is used for a particular purpose. Instead, as Cristiani said, Salvadorans should (sometimes) remember the past; it should be kept in mind as an example of what the future should not be like. Like art in a museum, the past is something you look at, something you do not touch, and then something you turn away from as you continue on to the next masterpiece.

Discussions about the usefulness of memory also appear in the conservative media. For example, in the midst of a rapidly increasing crime rate, *La Prensa Gráfica's* editors acknowledged that historical memory might help to prevent repetition. Recognizing that "the wounds, the scars, and their traces will not be erased overnight," the editors wrote in December 1993 that,

The historical memory of the conflict, which will naturally tend to become submerged in the collective subconscious, will act as a vaccine against war; nevertheless, the consequences of the conflict must be faced in reality. Becoming aware of this is the first of the challenges of the peace. It is like looking in a mirror where we see the cruelty which we were capable of, so as to move on to civilized and peaceful frameworks of coexistence where [this cruelty] will never again be repeated.¹²

Though the subconscious is not the best place for (a poorly defined) historical memory of conflict and trauma to rest (for it is difficult to work through trauma when it is buried in the subconscious¹³) and though the process by which that historical memory "naturally" is submerged in the subconscious is unclear, the editors do still repeat the idea that remembering will prevent repetition. Yet describing historical memory as a vaccine undermines the work memory does. Getting vaccinated is, more often than not, a one-time measure. Once the body has been vaccinated, it can safely enter into situations where it might be infected again. To imagine that historical memory is a vaccine thus works against non-repetition by eliminating the need to actually work *for* non-repetition by, for example, eliminating the social, structural, and political causes of the war.

Drawing on Olick, Robbins, Young, and Carrier's views on monuments, certainly Cristiani's and the editors' schizophrenic support for a monolithic memory of the "tragedy" "spring[s] from an opposite and equal desire to forget" the war. Indeed, their desire to forget is far stronger than their hope for memory. More than this, however, the way Cristiani and the editors hold up the past as an example, hoping to distance it from the present, is reminiscent of John Gillis' discussion of the "national" phase of commemoration, which he suggests began with the revolutions in the US and France and ended in the 1960s. Those involved in the revolutions, hoping to build a new future for their nations, engaged in a kind of collective, and conscious, amnesia of particular parts of the past. Part of this involved commemoration, which helped post-

¹² Editorial, "Viendo efectos de la guerra," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 9 December 1993. Whether the editors believed that the scars would be erased by a visit from the Pope is unclear.

¹³ *El Diario de Hoy* reported on an interesting incident that pointed to continued presence of the past in the present, at least in 1997. A former member of one of the military's elite (and human rights violating) battalions, the Batallón de Infantería de Reacción Inmediata (BIRI, Immediate Reaction Infantry Battalion) Bracamonte, and of the Policía Nacional (National Police), "crazed by liquor and, apparently, by disturbed by 'memories' of the war" threw a grenade at a family. (Jaime García, "Muertos y heridos provoca ex soldado," *El Diario de Hoy*, 21 January 1997.) He, at least, continued to be traumatized. On a related note, *La Prensa Gráfica*'s Roberto Turcios wrote in 2000 that El Salvador "has problems with its memory." The war and the years leading up to it "were so traumatic that they remain like indelible nightmares." He concluded that it was not possible to deal with this problem by turning "a calendar page." (Roberto Turcios, "Romero," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 28 March 2000.)

revolution societies break with the past and differentiate between the past and the present, the old and the new.¹⁴ This is precisely what conservatives do in the post-Peace era. By limiting the role of the past in the present, by declaring that the past will *only* serve the needs of the present in one way, conservatives create a distance between past and present. The break between past and present that conservatives' monumental understanding of the past revolves around is also clear. The past is not an integral part of the present; it is only something that can be turned to if, for example, El Salvador seems to be losing its way. (Conservatives' support of a selective forgetting of the past will be seen below.)

The past, of course, does not have to be monumental in the way that Young and Carrier describe. When Maya Lin spoke of her vision of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, she said, "I thought about what death is, what a loss is. A sharp pain that lessens with time, but can never quite heal over. A scar. The idea occurred to me there on the site. Take a knife and cut open the earth, and with time the grass would heal it."¹⁵ Charles and Stephen Griswold, pointed out that this process of healing would only be partial.¹⁶ Lin's comments are especially interesting in relation to Cristiani's thoughts about how the Pope would erase the scars of the war. They are also interesting in relation to what might be assumed from *La Prensa Gráfica's* editors' comment about scars; to say that "the scars...will not be erased over night" can be understood to mean that someday they will be. For Lin, however, the scar is an essential reminder of the past, of death, and of pain. To wish it gone, as Cristiani certainly does, further underscores the desire for oblivion, despite declarations in support of memory and the uses to which it can be put.

Human rights activists and progressive sectors are more fully supportive of memory and the work it does to ensure non-repetition, and they see the past more like a wound that has not yet and perhaps never will fully heal. While many repeated the rather simplistic formula that

¹⁴ John R. Gillis, "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship," in *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 7-10. There was also a simultaneous drive to reject the past, but to remember it as a point of reference against which to contrast the present, a trend which continued into the mid-twentieth century, as seen in the West German government's use of the memory of Nazism to legitimize democracy; Peter Gray and Kendrick Oliver, "The Memory of Catastrophe," *History Today* 51, no. 2 (2001): 11; Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 13 and 61.

¹⁵ Maya Lin, quoted in Robert Campbell, "An Emotive Place Apart," *A.I.A. Journal* (May 1983), 151.

¹⁶ Charles L. Griswold and Stephen S. Griswold, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography," *Critical Inquiry* 12, no.4 (1986): 709. For Gillis, the Vietnam War Memorial represented a shift in monument-building and commemorative practices. The Memorial, he writes, is an "anarchy of memory" for visitors are made to remember in some way. (John R. Gillis, "Memory and Identity," 13-5.)

remembering would prevent future violations, often not explicitly acknowledging that "never again" requires hard work, others explored the benefits of memory in greater depth. The social democratic Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (MNR, National Revolutionary Movement) tied remembering and memory to never again, and was among the first in the post-Peace era to do so. In a May 1992 ad in *La Prensa Gráfica* that reflected on 100 days of peace, the MNR wrote that "for the first time [those younger than 20 years old] are experiencing another way to co-exist, where the dead, the bullets, repression, and insecurity begin to become part of a past that should only be remembered as something to which we should not return."¹⁷ Here, though the MNR limited the usefulness of the past to an "only," as had some conservatives, they were, at least, far more specific about what happened in the past. The leftist organization Equipo Maíz was more enthusiastic about the role of memory in the present when they announced the publication of their book, *El Salvador: Imágenes para No Olvidar, 1900-1999*, in *El Diario de Hoy* in November 1999. The images that must not be forgotten are a visual reminder of "a century in the life and struggle of the people," with a focus on the popular movement, the guerrilla, and those who had been killed in that struggle. The announcement declared that the best way to prevent a repetition of past errors is to not forget them, "to always have them present in one's memory."¹⁸ Equipo Maíz did not paint over memory with a thick coat of oblivion as Cristiani and others had. Yet remembering a century of struggle is more than simply a whole-hearted embrace of memory. It was a clear rejection of the right's strong belief that foreign communists brought the war to El Salvador; remembering a century of struggle points to long-standing social injustice as a root cause of the war. More than this, it rejects Cristiani's hope that the past would *only* be remembered to prevent repetition; remembering this century of struggle reminds Salvadorans of their long history of organizing to demand change, thereby encouraging them to continue to do so.

¹⁷ "Reconocen positiva la ausencia de conflicto," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 20 May 1992.

¹⁸ Equipo Maíz, "La Marcha sigue su historia," *El Diario de Hoy*, 21 November 1999, paid ad. Many others also declared that memory would lead to never again, including the Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (PDDH, Ombudsman's Office for the Defense of Human Rights), the Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida (Las Dignas, Women for Dignity and Life), Guadalupe Mejía, the Comisión de Trabajo en Derechos Humanos Pro Memoria Histórica de El Salvador (Comisión Pro Memoria Histórica, Pro Historical Memory Human Rights Working Group of El Salvador), and historian Roberto Turcios; PDDH, "Saludemos orgullosos el nacimiento de un nuevo El Salvador," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 14 December 1992, paid ad; Norma Vázquez, "Presentación," in *Y la Montaña Habló: testimonios de guerrilleras y colaboradoras*, eds. Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida (San Salvador, 1997), 5; Sandra Moreno, "Mi historia, Un día en la vida," *El Diario de Hoy*, 17 April 2000; Comisión de Trabajo en Derechos Humanos Pro Memoria Histórica de El Salvador, *Diario Co-Latino*, 16 January 2002, paid ad; Roberto Turcios, "Ataque a la memoria," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 5 May 1998.

Non-conservatives have without a doubt called for memory and celebrated its salutary effects more often than conservatives. They have also offered more in depth discussions of memory and forgetting and the importance of the past for the present and future. Jesuit José María Tojeira's 2000 opinion piece in *Diario Co-Latino*, shortly after the 30th anniversary of the assassination of monseñor Romero, is a case in point. He wrote that, "We cannot forget, not only because the people assassinated were respectable, in many cases more respectable and exemplary than we are, but also because we do not want the evil to be repeated." Remembering the human rights violations committed during the war, including massacres and the assassination of mayors (that is, violations committed by both sides), always contains an "element of denunciation," and these crimes must be remembered, for forgetting them does little more than justify them.¹⁹ Tojeira continued his discussion of memory in early November 2004. He wrote that memory "rescues a past full of pain, and demands the transformation of all those attitudes and behaviors which created tragedies in the past and continue to produce problems in the present."²⁰ For Tojeira, the past and present are not so distant and memory does more than just serve as an example. Unlike conservatives' limiting of memory to preventing repetition, for the human rights community, memory denounces violations and demands change. And these, too, are part of the process of ensuring non-repetition. They are tools memory uses in the work that it does.

The members of the Asociación Intersectorial para el Desarrollo Económico y el Progreso Social (CIPED, Intersectoral Association for Economic Development and Social Progress) expanded on the idea that memory demands change. Celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Peace and the 75th anniversary of the 1932 massacre, CIPED declared that historical memory is "necessary to build peace." As long as memory is absent and "the truth [of memory] is not outlined, we will not be able to lay a firm foundation to build peace." Historical memory is also necessary for reconciliation, "especially when the reality of the present is full of injustice and social, political, economic, and cultural exclusion," precisely the factors which, CIPED noted, had led to both the 1932 massacre and the Civil War.²¹ History, it seemed, was repeating itself, and precisely because, as so many pointed out, the past and the causes of the war were forgotten,²² a forgetting Cristiani and others promoted through their far more enthusiastic and

¹⁹ José M. Tojeira, "El Papa y las violaciones de los Derechos Humanos," *Diario Co-Latino*, 30 March 2000.

²⁰ José M. Tojeira, "Difuntos, memoria y muerte," *Diario Co-Latino*, 2 November 2004.

²¹ CIPED, "Memoria Histórica; necesario para construir la paz," *Diario Co-Latino*, 24 January 2007, paid ad.

²² Salvadorans, after all, have a tendency to forget. See, for example, "Perisisten las causas de la guerra, dicen

unquestionable support for amnesty, *perdón*, and *olvido*. To remember, therefore, is more than just knowing that something happened. To remember is to denounce and demand change. It is to admit that the causes of past violence persist, to admit that the past is not as distant as it might seem. These things will work to prevent repetition.

What is remembered

In many statements about the war, the picture of what must be remembered is blurry. Cristiani's comments, for example, about the "fratricidal confrontation" and "that tragedy" are typical. They contribute to this blurriness, and to a whitewashing of the past and responsibility for human rights violations. Conservatives and those tied to the military do, however, sometimes have a very clear idea of what should be remembered and what is included in "memory." In *In Defense of the Homeland: The History of the Armed Conflict in El Salvador, 1980-1992*, General Humberto Corado Figueroa called on Salvadorans to remember the death and destruction caused by the FMLN.²³ For *El Diario de Hoy*, the "Memories of the War" include the 1989 Offensive; the FMLN's destruction of the Cuscatlán bridge, which had a devastating impact on the economy; war stories from Arcatao; and one soldier's war stories.²⁴ Other bits of the war that must be remembered include the FMLN's sacking of the National Palace and the FMLN's blowing up of the newly constructed Puente de Oro, the Bridge of Gold, in 1981.²⁵ Though the stories from Arcatao centered on the army's violations, and did not dance around their responsibility, most of *El Diario de Hoy*'s reporting is heavily slanted against the FMLN. *La Prensa Gráfica* is perhaps a bit more open. This openness can be seen from time to time in the newspaper's magazine, *Enfoques*, which published a weekly series of "Memorias" in the late 1990s. These memories included both the FMLN's killing of Lieutenant Colonel Domingo Monterrosa and the 1989 Final Offensive, including the bombing of Federación Nacional

jesuitas," *Diario Co-Latino*, 17 November 1994; Rosarlin Hernández, "Historia de la memoria perdida," *El Diario de Hoy*, 14 September 1997; Carlos Santos, "Para conjurar el olvido," *Revista Eco*, 21 July 2000; Sarah Currin and Eric Lemus, "A siete años de Acuerdos de Paz," *El Diario de Hoy*, 17 January 1999; "Decepción: Acuerdos no dieron el ancho," *El Diario de Hoy*, 14 February 2002; Óscar Picardo Joao, "Sobre 'monumentos', 'memorias' y 'verdades,'" *El Diario de Hoy*, 17 December 2003.

²³ General Humberto Corado Figueroa, *En Defensa de la Patria: Historia del Conflicto Armado en El Salvador, 1980-1992* (San Salvador: Tecnoimpresos, 2008), 280.

²⁴ "Memorias de guerra," *Vértice*, 14 March 1999; "La memoria de una guerra," *El Diario de Hoy*, 28 May 1999; Mirella Cáceres, "Memorias de Arcatao," *Revista Hablamos*, 28 April 2002; Lilian Martínez, "Sueños de guerra," *Vértice*, 25 September 2005.

²⁵ "Singular recibimiento: 'Ya viene el Frente!'" *El Diario de Hoy*, 3 February 1992; Roxana Hueza, "El oro vuelve a brillar," *El Diario de Hoy*, 1 June 2000.

Sindical de Trabajadores Salvadoreños (FENASTRAS, National Trade Union Federation of Salvadorian Workers) and the assassination of the Jesuits. The article on the Offensive did not mention either the intellectual or material authors of the Jesuit massacre, though Tojeira did in an interview on the following page.²⁶

As for *Diario Co-Latino*, the editors, commentators, and journalists do not deny that the FMLN violated human rights, but there is no doubt that their focus is on the military's violations. They concentrate on reminding Salvadorans of what the right labeled a partial truth in the wake of the publication of the Truth Commission report. Over the years, *Diario Co-Latino* has made it clear what parts of the past are included in the list of what to remember. These include the Tenango and Guadalupe massacres, the names of the victims of the war, the testimonies from the survivors of the military's La Raya massacre, the military's massacre at Las Aradas, and the approximately 8000 disappeared.²⁷ As well, the editors took it upon themselves to create a section dedicated to the "Memories of the Fallen." Understood as a way to fulfill, in part, the Truth Commission's recommendation to build a monument to the victims, photos of guerrillas and some important civilian victims of the war were published regularly so that they could become part of the country's collective memory.²⁸ *Diario Co-Latino* also published a series titled "Historical Memory," which included articles about the Peace Accords, the 1989 Offensive, and Romero's assassination.²⁹

El Diario de Hoy, *La Prensa Gráfica*, and *Diario Co-Latino*, therefore, agreed that the 1989 Offensive was important and should be remembered, though they highlighted different aspects of that Offensive in their reporting.³⁰ But whether the Offensive fit in the category of memory or historical memory is unclear. Perhaps it was historical memory for leftists and

²⁶ Omar Cabrera, "Jaque mate a un guerrero," *Enfoques*, 1 November 1998; Omar Cabrera, "Hasta el tope de la guerra," *Enfoques*, 15 November 1998; " ' La guerra no tenía sentido,' " *Enfoques*, 15 November 1998.

²⁷ Ivón López, "Pese a olvido oficial: Conmemoran por segunda vez 17 aniversario de masacre Tenango y Guadalupe," *Diario Co-Latino*, 4 March 2000; Iván Escobar, "Familiares de víctimas de violaciones a Derechos Humanos esperan reivindicar a seres queridos," *Diario Co-Latino*, 11 January 2002; Leonor Cárdenas, "Sobrevivientes de masacre 'La raya' buscan sanar heridas," *Diario Co-Latino*, 30 March 2009; David Pérez, "La memoria de las piedras," *Diario Co-Latino*, 18 May 2011; "Retratos para no olvidar" *Diario Co-Latino*, 24 May 2011

²⁸ See, for example, "Memoria de los caídos" (series), *Diario Co-Latino* 1 November 1999.

²⁹ Mariano Castro Morán, "Los Acuerdos de Paz," *Diario Co-Latino*, 20 and 27 March 2000 and 3 and 10 April 2000; Paulino Espinoza, "Monseñor Romero, fuente inagotable de inspiración," *Diario Co-Latino*, 25 March 2009; Roberto Hugo Preza, "Memorias de Guerra," *Diario Co-Latino*, 10 November 1999.

³⁰ For example, the human rights community and left-leaning papers focus on the assassination of the Jesuits. If conservative papers mention this, they highlight that it was in the middle of a war, in a confrontation (i.e. the Offensive) the FMLN unleashed. Instead of focusing on the Jesuits, they underscore the death and destruction the FMLN caused and the fact that their action did not spark a general uprising.

memory for more conservative individuals? Or perhaps historical memory and memory are interchangeable? Some of the confusion or uncertainty about what historical memory or memory actually is brings to mind David Berliner's comments on "The Abuses of Memory." Though he was writing more specifically about anthropologists' abuse of memory, much of it reflects how the terms are used in the public sphere in El Salvador. Examining how memory is understood in anthropological writing, Berliner states that, "by virtue of its semantic multidimensionality, memory is an expansive label that seems to migrate into different places." He concludes that, "by a dangerous process of expansion, memory gradually becomes everything which is transmitted across generations... 'almost indistinguishable' then from the concept of culture itself."³¹ Though newspapers generally do not use memory to mean culture, Berliner's view that memory is an expansive, as well as "vague [and] fuzzy" label which is "constantly and unthinkingly deployed,"³² reflects some of its usage in El Salvador. In newspapers, memory certainly has migrated into different places, becoming a convenient, and unclear, label used to describe what seems to be little different from simple history.

For human rights organizations "the past" which must be remembered was unlike the past conservatives wanted to remember, which focused on the FMLN's military actions and human rights violations. Human rights organizations' past was roughly the same as "the truth" discussed in the previous chapter, a truth centered on overwhelming military responsibility for human rights violations. Though the connection is most clear when these organizations' discourse is explored, as will be seen, poet and journalist Julio Villarán, writing in *El Diario de Hoy's* *Vertice* magazine in 2000, brought many of the different ideas circulating in the public sphere about truth, memory, and forgetting together quite neatly. He began by asserting that "*olvido*," or "the lack of historical memory," has been a problem for El Salvador since 1992. And this is true despite the creation of the Truth Commission, which "revealed details about some crimes"; nevertheless, what happened in the past has not been acknowledged and responsibility has not been assigned, resulting in only partial reconciliation. He, therefore, called on Salvadorans to know and accept the truth, to investigate the crimes committed and who was responsible for them. Though there was, he reminded readers, the issue of the constitutionality of the Amnesty to resolve, "while the truth, which is a moral demand, hides her face from us, we will continue

³¹ David Berliner, "The Abuses of Memory: Reflections on the Memory Boom in Anthropology," *Anthropological Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (2005): 201-2.

³² Berliner, "The Abuses of Memory," 206.

believing in a twisted or partial history, and we will also continue to be a morally decayed country as a result." He concluded by recognizing that knowing what happened in the past might not prevent the re-commission of the same "errors," but it would at least make "us think about the past and make us cautious."³³ For Villarán, there is clearly a connection between forgetting/amnesty and truth, as demonstrated in the previous chapter. But there is also a connection between these and memory. To forget is to lack historical memory, and what is forgotten are the details of the crimes—or perhaps they are simply errors?—committed during the conflict, some of which the Truth Commission revealed. Historical memory, then, consists of the crimes/errors committed in the war, and El Salvador needs to remember them. El Salvador needs "Memory and Truth," as Villarán titled the piece. His embrace of the Truth Commission's truth is not entirely complete, for he does acknowledge that it investigated only some of the crimes of the war, but it is nevertheless clear that the Amnesty promoted a forgetting of the crimes of the war, of the contents of the Truth Commission report, and that these—the historical memory of the war—cannot be lost. To do so is to jeopardize El Salvador's future.

The connection between not forgetting, historical memory, memory, and truth is very clearly seen in the Monumento a la Memoria y la Verdad, where the names of over 30,000 victims—victims of both the guerrilla and military—have been carved into 85 meters of black granite. Gloria Guzmán Orellana, one of the founding members of Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida (Las Dignas, Women for Dignity and Life) and a woman who was heavily involved in promoting and organizing the construction of the Monument for Memory and Truth, co-authored a book with Irantzu Mendia Azkue which detailed some of the struggles to build the monument. The Comité Pro-Monumento a las Víctimas Civiles de Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos (Comité Pro-Monumento, Committee to Build a Monument to the Civilian Victims of Human Rights Violations)³⁴ was created in 1997 specifically to promote the construction of a monument

³³ Julio Villarán, "Memoria y verdad," *Vértice*, 9 April 2000.

³⁴ The Pro-Monument Committee included Las Dignas, Tutela Legal del Arzobispado de San Salvador (Tutela Legal, Archbishop of San Salvador's Legal Aid Office), Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (MUPI, Museum of the Word and the Image), Asociación Pro-Búsqueda de Niñas y Niños Desaparecidos, (Pro-Búsqueda, Pro-Search Association of Disappeared Children), Asociación Centro de Paz (CEPAZ, Center of Peace Association), Centro para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos "Madeleine Lagadec" (CPDH, Center for the Promotion of Human Rights "Madeleine Lagadec"), Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador (CDHES, Human Rights Commission of El Salvador), Comité de Familiares de Víctimas de Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos "Marianella García Villas" (Codefam, Committee of Relatives of Victims of Human Rights Violations "Marianella García Villas"), Co-Madres, Comité de Madres y Familiares Cristianos de Presos, Desaparecidos, y Asesinados (COMAFAC, Christian Committee of Mother and Relatives of Prisoners, the

to honor the civilian victims of human rights violations, and only in cases where the victim had died or disappeared. The decision about which victims to honor was made after some debate. Ultimately, as the authors describe it, the Comité Pro-Monumento decided to honor this limited list of victims because it was inconceivable to think of having the names of the perpetrators and those they killed on the same monument.³⁵ As seen in the photo below, some view the list as incomplete. The two victims listed in the top right corner were catechists. The three names below them are of the Aguilar family, massacred by the National Guard in 1979 in Toluca.



Those not remembered in granite.
Photo taken by author. 12 May 2012.

The construction of the Monument for Memory and Truth was meant to fulfill the Truth Commission's recommendation regarding moral reparations, a recommendation the state had failed to fulfill. As a result, victims and civil society organizations took it upon themselves to create a space, not only for relatives of the disappeared and others victims to remember and mourn their loved ones, but also to prevent a more generalized forgetting. The inscription, dedicated in 2003, reads, "This is a memorial for encounters, to never forget [the victims], to honor their memory, to return their dignity to them, to not allow the horror to be repeated, and to lay the foundation for a culture of peace and true reconciliation. This is a space for hope, to continue dreaming and to build a more just, humane, and fair society." This last phrase, of course, is exactly why conservatives wanted the past to *only* be remembered for certain things.

Disappeared, and Assassinated), Asociación de Radios y Programas Participativos de El Salvador (ARPAS, Association of Radio and Participatory Programs of El Salvador), Asociación Yek Ineme, and the UCA.

³⁵ Gloria Guzmán Orellana and Irantzu Mendia Azkue, *Mujeres con Memoria: Activistas del Movimiento de Derechos Humanos en El Salvador* (Bilbao: Hegoa, 2013), 82-3.

The Monument for Memory and Truth, which is hard to criticize for truly being inspired by a will to forget, as Winter suggests about Holocaust memorials, is both backward and forward looking. The names of the victims, hopefully "immortalized in the Salvadoran conscience," will form the foundation, the base, of a new El Salvador. The past, and specifically past death, is the foundation of the future, of a future where the past can never, and will never, happen again.

While the names of civilian victims on the monument are only metaphorically the foundation of a new El Salvador, the names of the children massacred in El Mozote truly are the foundation of something new, as Jesuit and Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas" (UCA, Central American University "José Simeón Cañas") professor Mauricio Gaborit explained. The children's names are written at ground level on the tiles of the town's new church. The children, victims of brutal military oppression, are very clearly and definitely the foundation of the new church.³⁶ They provide shape and strength to the base, both of which are required to



The rebuilt church in El Mozote.
Photo by author. 29 June 2012.

build something new, something that will last. Without a strong foundation, buildings crumble and must be built once again. For those who planned the church, it would have been impossible

³⁶ Mauricio Gaborit, in conversation with author, 8 November 2013.

to erect the new church without the names of the children. In a similar fashion, without the victims named on the monument in San Salvador, and tens of thousands not named, it is impossible to build a new El Salvador.³⁷ In this view, the dead, their memory, and the truth of the Truth Commission are very present and very actively work for non-repetition and reconciliation. For the organizations making up the Comité Pro-Monumento, the deaths of the over 30,000 victims named on the monument, and the deaths of those not on the monument, responsibility for which lies on both sides, are truth and memory, and they are the foundation of a new nation. ARENA presidents, in contrast, declare that amnesty/forgetting are the foundation of the peace. Indeed, in 2013, former president Francisco Flores described the amnesty as the cornerstone of the peace;³⁸ more than simply being the foundation of the new El Salvador, for conservatives amnesty/forgetting is the stone around which all other stones will be laid.

While the Comité Pro-Monumento talked only about truth, memory, and forgetting, that many organizations involved in the Comité were also members of the Comisión de Trabajo en Derechos Humanos Pro Memoria Histórica de El Salvador (Comisión Pro Memoria Histórica, Pro Historical Memory Human Rights Working Group of El Salvador) points to a clear connection between these and historical memory. The connection is even more clear in the discourse used to describe the work and closing of one of these organizations, the Oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado de San Salvador (Tutela Legal, Archbishop of San Salvador's Legal Aid Office). Tutela Legal housed an extensive archive of human rights violations committed by both sides.³⁹ The link between these denunciations and historical memory is clear in long-time director María Julia Hernández's championing of historical memory; she said, "Hiding historical memory and denying the inalienable rights of the victims have not provided Salvadoran society with a guarantee of non-repetition."⁴⁰ Tutela Legal worked to document, preserve, and reveal the country's historical memory and to ensure that the victims could exercise

³⁷ The victims listed on the monument are quite similar to those included in the Truth Commission report, though the list of victims on the monument is more complete. Not only are there more names (though not enough as relatives or *compañeros* have added more names with paper and tape), but the monument also includes victims from before 1980, the start date of the Truth Commission's investigations. The Comité Pro-Monumento was not alone in insisting that pre-1980 events be remembered. Equipo Maíz, for example, insisted that the student victims of the military's 30 July 1975 massacre be remembered; Equipo Maíz, "El 30 de julio: fuego que enciende a estudiantes," *La Página Maíz* 300 (30 July 2010.)

³⁸ Gloria Morán, "Derogar Amnistía, un paso para la democracia," *Contrapunto*, 25 September 2013, <http://www.contrapunto.com.sv/ddhh/derogar-amnistia-un-paso-para-la-democracia>.

³⁹ Member of CDHES, conversation with author, 29 May 2012.

⁴⁰ Asociación de Derechos Humanos Tutela Legal "Dra. Maria Julia Hernandez," "Nuestra Labor," accessed 10 September 2014, http://tutelalegalmariajh.com/nuestra_labor.php.

their rights, thereby contributing to non-repetition. Part of this work included providing information to the Truth Commission; 80% of the cases included in *De la Locura a la Esperanza* are in Tutela Legal's archive.⁴¹

That human rights violations are historical memory is even more clear in the denunciations about the Archdiocese's 30 September 2013 closing of Tutela Legal. The Archdiocese, under the direction of Archbishop José Luis Escobar Alas, said on 2 October that Tutela Legal had been closed to "adjust" the church's work to focus more on accompanying contemporary victims of human rights violations; a new organism would be created with this end, for offering legal aid cannot "only focus on the human rights which were violated in that historical moment." The archives, which the church recognized were part of the country and church's historical memory, would be transferred to a new Center for Documentation and Archives and "made available to researchers to help to build a society based on truth, justice, and respect for human right."⁴² This sounds innocuous enough, and certainly there are countless victims of post-Peace violence who need legal aid and accompaniment, but based on informal conversations with members of human rights organizations, and as Tutela Legal declared on 1 October, the office was actually closed because the Corte Suprema de Justicia (CSJ, Supreme Court of Justice) was about to begin reviewing the constitutionality of the 1993 Amnesty, thereby opening the possibility of trials against the perpetrators of human rights violations.⁴³ Tutela Legal's vast archive contains evidence that might have been used in such trials. The human rights community, therefore, believe that the Archbishop, supported by a "fuerza oscura," a dark force, as in the photo below, taken at a demonstration in front of the National Cathedral protesting the decision, closed Tutela Legal as a way to protect the perpetrators and perpetuate impunity, as a way to truly contain evidence of gross human rights violations.

⁴¹ Tutela Legal, "Tutela Legal informa a los comunicadores nacionales e internacionales y al pueblo salvadoreño," *Diario Co-Latino*, 3 October 2013, paid ad; Member of CDHES, interview with author.

⁴² "Comunicado de la Arquidiócesis de San Salvador referente a la disolución de la oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado," 2 October 2013, <http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/salvador/doc/archivo7.html>; Daniel Valencia Caravantes and Gabriel Labrador, "Arzobispado cambia por tercera vez el argumento que lo llevó a cerrar Tutela Legal," *El Faro*, 7 October 2013, <http://www.elfaro.net/es/201310/noticias/13544/>.

⁴³ Tutela Legal, "Tutela Legal informa a los comunicadores nacionales e internacionales y al pueblo salvadoreño," *Diario Co-Latino*, 3 October 2013, paid ad.



Photo taken by author. 27 October 2013.

The decision to close Tutela Legal was made suddenly, at least from the point of view of Tutela's director, Ovidio González, and other employees. They arrived at work to find the gate locked. In a protest a few days later, employees denounced the closing, calling for a stop to the "kidnapping of historical memory."⁴⁴ The archives, therefore, are historical memory, a belief members of the Red Activista de El Salvador (Activist Network of El Salvador),⁴⁵ other activists, and relatives shared. Those protesting the closing carried signs declaring, "Historical memory is not private property," as in the photo, and "Memory is not for sale." Another protest was called "Un Abrazo a la Memoria," "An Embrace of Memory." The Comisión Pro Memoria Histórica denounced the closing of Tutela Legal as a "serious setback for the preservation of the Historical Memory of our country, for the search for much-needed reconciliation."⁴⁶ The attack on the

⁴⁴ Center for Justice and Accountability, 4 October 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/CenterForJusticeAndAccountability/photos/pb.52340675418.-2207520000.1406920286./10151919264135419/?type=3&theater>.

⁴⁵ Activista is a worldwide organization of young people who struggle for social justice.

⁴⁶ Comisión de Trabajo en Derechos Humanos Pro Memoria Histórica, "Ante el arbitrario y violento cierre de la oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado," 4 October 2013, <http://voces.org.sv/2013/10/03/ante-el-arbitrario-y-violento-cierre-de-la-oficina-de-tutela-legal-del-arzobispado/>. *Diario Co-Latino* reported that Pro Memoria Histórica wanted the archive to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, since it contains El Salvador's historical memory. See, for example, Alma Vilches, "Organizaciones piden que PDHH resguarde archivos históricos de ex Tutela Legal," *Diario Co-Latino*, 28 October 2013, <http://www.diariocolatino.com/es/20131028/nacionales/121603/Organizaciones-piden-que-PDHH-resguarde->

offices and archives of the Asociación Pro-Búsqueda de Niñas and Niños Desaparecidos (Pro-Búsqueda, Pro-Search Association of Disappeared Children) shortly after was denounced in a similar fashion.

The call for Salvadorans to gather in front of the National Cathedral and protest the closing of Tutela Legal, threats made against the Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (PDDH, Ombudsman's Office for the Defense of Human Rights) and the Secretary of Culture in their attempt to protect the archive, and the attack on Pro-Búsqueda described these events as "crimes against Historical Memory" and demanded that the government investigate and punish those responsible. For victims and human rights organizations, and even for Archbishop Alas, historical memory and memory were understood to be the same as the human rights violations committed during the war, the majority of which were committed by the military and paramilitary organizations. Given Tutela Legal's important contribution to the investigations of the Truth Commission, in addition to containing the memory or historical memory of El Salvador, their archive also contained truth.

Re-remembering the war/rewriting history

But declarations that all or some aspect of the past must be remembered are more than declarations that memory/historical memory/truth will help prevent repetition; they are more than just calls to remember the victims and support the Truth Commission and its findings. Human rights organizations called for the complete re-centering of understandings about the past; they wanted the victims' perspective to be the focus, as the Centro para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos "Madeleine Lagadec" (CPDH, Center for the Promotion of Human Rights "Madeleine Lagadec") wrote in 2006. They proposed educating the youth with this new perspective with the aim of constructing a "more just society" in which human rights were respected.⁴⁷ They proposed, therefore, re-writing the narrative of the war so that the victims took center stage. Using Manolo Vela Castañeda's "metaphorical" use of memory to describe "the

archivos-hist%C3%B3ricos-de-ex-Tutela-Legal.htm; Miguel Vaquerano, "PDDH pide declarar patrimonio histórico archivos de Tutela Legal," 30 October 2013, <http://www.verdaddigital.com/index.php/nacionales/7103-pddh-pide-declarar-patrimonio-archivos-de-tutela-legal>.

⁴⁷ Comisión para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos "Madeleine Lagadec," *Informe de Investigación Temática: La Experiencia del CPDH "Madeleine Lagadec" en el Acompañamiento a Familiares de Víctimas en la Exigencia de Sus Derechos* (San Salvador, 2006), 42.

combination of historical narratives and cultural creation around the past,"⁴⁸ it is clear that re-remembering the war is precisely what the CPDH proposed.

Luis Alvarenga, writing for *Diario Co-Latino*, had discussed this re-writing of the narrative of the war in 2004, affirming that "historical memory should not be ethically neutral," a comment which brings to mind Tojeira's view that remembering is denouncing. Alvarenga's comments were inspired by what he described as the "'historical cleansing'" of ARENA founder Roberto D'Aubuisson's reputation and his responsibility for gross human rights violations. Alvarenga identified this cleansing as part of a larger "battle to recover the ideological hegemony [the right] lost in the war," and in this battle, the right armed itself with "their symbols, personalities, and historical interpretations" to win. In the right-wing, purified view, D'Aubuisson became a "guardian of peace and democracy." Since, as Alvarenga stated, historical memory in El Salvador was so weak, since there were no other "images" to challenge the right-wing view of him, it "is beginning to be etched in the collective conscious" and achieve the "status of truth."⁴⁹

Alvarenga's comments also bring history more clearly into the picture, for he declared that it was important for Salvadorans to know "history told from the victims' point of view." Returning to the impossibility of historical memory being neutral, he also wrote that decisions must be made when dealing with historical memory; "above all," a perspective must be selected. Will historical memory be approached from the point of view of the perpetrators, or from that of the victims? The right, which worshipped D'Aubuisson as a hero, clearly chose the perpetrator's perspective and Alvarenga cautioned against it, against attempting to write history by omitting those things which "stand in contrast to" one's own interpretation. The right, therefore, was not performing "historiographical work"; rather, they were indoctrinating and ideologizing. The ultimate effect of this was to cover up what had happened. None of this helped to interpret the past or understand the present, which was, he said, what history was supposed to do.⁵⁰ Clearly, of course, at least some on the left can also be accused of indoctrinating and ideologizing and so not performing historiographical work. Alvarenga himself seems to commit this error when he rejected the perpetrator's perspective in favor of the victims'. Surely those who write history from the victims' perspective also leave out whatever "stand[s] in contrast to" their interpretation and

⁴⁸ Manolo Vela Castañeda, "Memorias de una Batalla: Guatemala," unpublished manuscript, 21-2.

⁴⁹ Luis Alvarenga, "Por qué la memoria histórica no debe ser éticamente neutral," *Diario Co-Latino*, 3 November 2004.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

experience. Nevertheless, it is clear that when Alvarenga talks about history told from the victims' perspective, when he says that historical memory should not be ethically neutral, he is talking about the same thing. He uses history and historical memory (which was already equated to memory in the public discourse) interchangeably,⁵¹ and both, it seems, should be based on what the human rights community sees as the truth of the war. Much as the inscription to the Monument for Truth and Memory affirms, putting the victims' stories and their truth at the heart of an understanding of the past is essential.

Jesuit Mauricio Gaborit also acknowledges the existence of two distinct ideas about the war. In "Historical Memory: reverting to history from the victims' [perspective]," Gaborit describes two distinct narratives which exist in El Salvador: the victims' and the official narrative. While the former is a narrative of suffering, the latter "does not recognize this suffering, denies it, or presents it in such a way that it is disqualified or denigrated." The state, he writes, sees the official version as the only version, as "true and essential for national reconciliation, although it is really based on impunity and its objective is its own perpetuation."⁵² The perpetrators, in Gaborit's view, seek to turn "their version of what happened" into the official history so that this version becomes the collective memory of the war. They do this through various strategies, including "forced forgetting," which involves, for example, purposefully leaving out important events or "manipulat[ing] the connections between events" and presenting the perpetrators as the real victims.⁵³ This official narrative of the war, "constructed by the exercise of power" and insisting on wiping the slate clean (i.e., forgetting), stands in opposition to a second narrative of the war, based on the "suffering which injustice produces." It is a narrative rooted in the experience of the victims and constructed from their own perspective. This other narrative, the "memory of these collective events," is geared, first and foremost,

⁵¹ Of course not all on to the left of the political spectrum believed that history and memory were the same. Former guerrilla commander, Dagoberto Gutiérrez, offered his views on the matter in 2011, both online at "Simpatizantes FMLN" and in *Diario Co-Latino*. In the former, he wrote, in relation to the potential capture of the officers named in Spain as responsible for the Jesuit massacre, that "History is a trip to the past; memory is also a trip to the past but history has a degree of commitment to the truth. Memory is based on remembering." (Luis Canizalez, "Dagoberto Gutiérrez: 'Si no hacés justicia en casa, otro la hará,'" *Simpatizantes FMLN*, 11 August 2011, <http://www.simpatizantesfmln.org/blog/archives/7596>.) He followed this up a few days later in *Diario Co-Latino* with "History, official in this case, indicated that everything is resolved; but memory shows that nothing is, that truth, justice, *perdón* and reconciliation are pending, and that, in their absence, a social war which is even more cruel, even more bloody has been set up, and that we are living through the most uncertainty in our history." (Dagoberto Gutiérrez, "El regimen verdadero," *Diario Co-Latino*, 15 August 2011.)

⁵² Mauricio Gaborit, "Memoria histórica: revertir la historia desde las víctimas," *Estudios Centroamericanos* 61, no. 693-694 (July-August 2006), 666-7.

⁵³ Gaborit, "Memoria histórica," 674 and 678.

toward "laying the foundation of the right to the truth" and clarifying what happened in the past. The reweaving of the social fabric would follow from this foundation, a reweaving that includes the "reconstruction of group and interpersonal relations damaged by the official lie." Comparing the two narratives, he declares that, while the official narrative relies on "anesthetization and amnesia," the second uses "historical memory as the solid foundation of social reconstruction."⁵⁴ As had the CPDH and Alvarenga, Gaborit argues that the victims' stories and suffering—the memory/historical memory of the war—stand in contrast to a narrative based on lies and forgetting, and it is memory/historical memory, and not forgetting, which will help rebuild Salvadoran society. At the same time, and unlike the CPDH and Alvarenga, history is not identical to historical memory in Gaborit's writing. Rather, narrative/memory/historical memory/truth are the building blocks of history.

The non-governmental Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador (CDHES, Human Rights Commission of El Salvador) had a similar view of memory/historical memory and history. The CDHES, through its Documentation Center of Historical Memory "Marianella García Villas," aimed to preserve El Salvador's historical memory—denunciations of human rights violations—so that the history of the country would be known.⁵⁵ For the CDHES, historical memory—the thousands of pages of denunciations in the Documentation Center, denunciations very similar to those in Tutela Legal's archive that contributed to the Truth Commission's investigations—helps to write history, and preserving one will help to make the other known. This connection between historical memory and history is also clear in journalist Ivón López's 2000 article in *Diario Co-Latino* about the commemoration of the Tenango and Guadalupe massacres. López describes the commemoration as oriented toward "maintain[ing] the historical memory of our country" and includes the testimonies of various survivors. These testimonies, she wrote, collected by the Movement for the Rescue of Our History, allow Salvadorans to know the "cruel history of the war," "Despite official forgetting."⁵⁶ Here, López adds an extra element to the how the past is talked about: commemoration (i.e., remembering the testimonies together); the larger discourse, however, remains, as does an understanding of historical memory (i.e., the victims' testimonies) as being the foundation of history.

⁵⁴ Gaborit, "Memoria histórica," 682 and 666-7.

⁵⁵ CDHES pamphlet describing the work of the Documentation Center of Historical Memory "Marianella García Villas."

⁵⁶ Ivón López, "Pese al olvido oficial: Conmemoran por segunda vez 17 aniversario de masacre Tenango y Guadalupe," *Diario Co-Latino*, 4 March 2000.

President Mauricio Funes, elected in 2009 for the FMLN, agreed. Celebrating the anniversary of the peace in El Mozote in 2012, Funes, in the name of the state, asked for *perdón* for the massacre where nearly 1000 were killed over the course of several days in 1981.⁵⁷ (This request for *perdón* will be discussed in depth in Chapter Six.) He also recognized that Domingo Monterrosa, José Azmitia, and Natividad de Jesús Cáceres were responsible for the massacre. Funes then instructed the Armed Forces to "revise their interpretation of history in light of the historic recognition" he made that day. In addition, Funes instructed the military to stop honoring those, like Monterrosa, who could be tied to the commission of gross human rights violations.⁵⁸ *Diario Co-Latino's* 18 January editorial quoted Funes as declaring, "I am here in El Mozote to recognize the truth," a truth which included the names of three of those responsible for the massacre, "among others named by the Truth Commission." "[T]his painful truth," he added, was one which "some have wanted to hide for more than 30 years."⁵⁹ It was based on this truth—the truth *De la Locura a la Esperanza* revealed—that Funes instructed the military to revise its interpretation of history and not to honor perpetrators as heroes, a truth which, as seen above, was itself based to a large extent on Tutela Legal's archive of denunciations and testimony. In the end, Funes told the military to revise history based on what public discourse about the past had already equated with historical memory.

Despite the blurriness of some of the reporting on what it was exactly that Funes had asked the military to do, whether his instructions were related to historical memory or history,⁶⁰ Funes really did seem clear in what he wanted the military to do: revise their interpretation of

⁵⁷ *La Prensa Gráfica's* interestingly, called the massacre genocide several times in mid-January. (Fernando Romero, "Vigésimo aniversario de los Acuerdos de Paz en El Mozote," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 16 January 2012; Fernando Romero, Amadeo Cabrera, and María José Saavedra, "Funes ordena reescribir la historia a la luz de la masacre de El Mozote," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 17 January 2012; "María Márquez quiere saber 'Qué y a quién' perdonar," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 18 January 2012.)

⁵⁸ Roberto Flores and Iván Escobar, " 'Este pedido de perdón no pretende borrar el dolor': Presidente Funes," *Diario Co-Latino*, 16 January 2012; Roberto Flores, "Presidente Funes instruye a militares revisar su interpretación de la historia," *Diario Co-Latino*, 17 January 2012. Revising history was not limited to the military. Funes made the same request to political parties and also announced that school textbooks would be edited "so that there would no longer be a continued denial of the human rights violations committed during the civil war." (Robeto Flores, "Solicitud de perdón incluye programas de reparación para víctimas en El Mozote," *Diario Co-Latino*, 17 January 2012.)

⁵⁹ Editorial, "El Mozote y los 20 años del Acuerdo de Paz," *Diario Co-Latino*, 18 January 2012.

⁶⁰ *Diario Co-Latino* reporter Beatriz Castillo wrote that Minister of Defense José Atilio Benítez confirmed that a "commission to evaluate historical memory" would be created. (Beatriz Castillo, "Ministro de Defensa confirma creación de comisión que evaluará memoria histórica," *Diario Co-Latino*, 19 January 2012.) *La Prensa Gráfica's* article on the same thing spoke only of reviewing the army's history. (Fernando Romero, "Defensa crea comisión para revisar historia del Ejército," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 19 January 2012.)

history so that it reflected the Truth Commission and victims' truth of the El Mozote massacre. He asked the military to reinterpret history to be more from the victims' perspective, just as the CPDH, Alvarenga, and Gaborit had. Indeed, in addition to being unprecedented in post-Peace El



The Military Museum in the El Zapote Barracks in San Salvador still had a room dedicated to Monterrosa, his heroism, and his life as a soldier and officer. Photos by author. 3 June 2012.

Salvador, Funes' request for *perdón*, his recognition of the military's responsibility for the massacre, and his public naming of Monterrosa, Azmitía, and Cáceres as perpetrators contributed to precisely the re-interpretation of history which he called on the military and political parties to carry out, a history which affirms and does not deny the victims' memory/truth. ARENA governments, the media, and the military, as seen in Chapter Four, preferred to silence and forget the crimes of the past and forget and erase responsibility for them. Indeed, how could someone have committed crimes that had never really happened? To officially declare that Monterrosa was anything other than a hero who died saving the nation from the peril of terrorism and international communism was unheard of. This recognition alone was significant enough, and showed Funes' belief in the victims' truth; as the elected president of the country, his declarations were finally (and very belatedly) an official recognition of that truth. Yet in addition to simply naming the perpetrators of the massacre and recognizing state responsibility for it, Funes requested *perdón* in the name of the same state which had ultimately been responsible. All of this is part of the process of re-interpreting the history of the conflict, this time placing the victims and their truth at the center of that history, for it is their truth which provide history's raw material.

Stepping back from the relationship between historical memory/memory/truth and history, Funes asked the military to do more than re-interpret history based on the victims' truth. He was also asking the military to re-remember the war; he wanted the military to interpret and

understand the war through the victims' eyes, through the eyes of those who see Monterrosa as a villain, not a hero. This, to be sure, includes the FMLN. Drawing on Stern and Vela Castañeda, to insist that one of the perpetrators no longer be honored as a hero is to ask that the military re-imagine Monterrosa's role in the war and that it alter its memory, a task which is far more difficult to achieve, or even to attempt to achieve.



"Our heroes!!!" Monterrosa and Azmitia. Military Museum at El Zapote Barracks.
Photo by author. 3 June 2012.

Some former officers saw an opportunity in Funes' statement. As they put it, it would finally give the military a chance to tell its version of events.⁶¹ This attitude is in keeping with the work of retired officer, Juan Orlando Zepeda Herrera. In his 2008 book, Zepeda Herrera said he sought to "put light where there is still darkness, bring memory where there is forgetting, understand what happened, analyzing the causes and effects, that is, to revise the history of what happened in El Salvador."⁶² Retired officer Sigifrido Ochoa Pérez, who was named as one of the

⁶¹ Fernando Romero, "Militares con reservas ante disposiciones de Funes," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 18 January 2012; Fernando Romero, "Defensa crea comisión para revisar historia del Ejército," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 19 January 2012.

⁶² Juan Orlando Zepeda Herrera, *Perfiles de la Guerra en El Salvador* (San Salvador: New Graphics, 2008), 19-21.

perpetrators of the 1982 El Calabazo massacre,⁶³ was the most outspoken in his opposition to Funes' directive. *La Prensa Gráfica* reported Ochoa Pérez saying that it was "unfortunate" that Funes named Monterrosa (who journalist Fernando Romero reminded readers was a friend of Ochoa Pérez) as "the main perpetrator of the El Mozote massacre" and ordered the Army to review its history. As Romero reported it, Ochoa Pérez declared that Monterrosa "and all those who died giving their lives for the country are heroes."⁶⁴ *Diario Co-Latino* quoted a few of Ochoa Pérez's more fiery statements in an article describing the officer as "challenging" Funes. Ochoa Pérez said that, "For us, Azmitia and Monterrosa are heroes, therefore, he should not stick his nose into this business of wanting to change history."⁶⁵ Little energy was wasted in denying "the facts" of the massacre; the focus was on Monterrosa's role in the war and the meaning and emotion attached to his life and death. The focus is on memory and how he is remembered, thereby silencing the massacre to a large extent.

While Ochoa Pérez's statements were wrought with anger, the editors of *La Prensa Gráfica* rejected Funes' actions with less bile, though equal force. The editors expressed their dismay at Funes' focus on the El Mozote massacre (responsibility for which the editors failed to mention). "As tragic and painful" as the massacre was, they wrote, to focus on just one event of "that period" is to continue the partiality with which the war is discussed. Funes' focus on one event contributed to the "fragmentation" of what happened, which "inevitably generates an interminable blame game." What was needed was a more complete view of the war. The editors further criticized Funes for his talk of "rewriting history" with all the "multiple distortions" that this has always involved. Though the editors recognized the importance of knowing the truth, it was important to search for it "without passion and without partiality." Salvadorans should know the truth, not so that they could blame each other for what happened, but so that the "truth becomes the supreme deterrent of any type of offensive or abusive behavior."⁶⁶ Here, the editors were taking the cue from Cristiani and limiting the usefulness of truth to non-repetition. They were, however, clearer than he was when he spoke of memory; the past should certainly not be used to place blame.

⁶³ Editorial, "Los verdaderos héroes y heroínas son las víctimas civiles de la guerra," *Diario Co-Latino*, 20 January 2012.

⁶⁴ Fernando Romero, "Militares con reservas ante disposiciones de Funes," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 18 January 2012.

⁶⁵ Zoraya Urbina, "Ochoa Pérez reta al presidente Funes," *Diario Co-Latino*, 17 January 2012. One wonders if Cáceres was also a hero.

⁶⁶ Editorial, "Hay que tener mucho cuidado de no revolver más las aguas," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 18 January 2012.

The editors repeated the same critical discourse heard after the publication of *De la Locura a la Esperanza*. Funes' focus on the military's violations, like that of the Truth Commission, was not impartial. Choosing El Mozote was clearly evidence of Funes' politics. But perhaps the bigger issue, and further proof of Funes' bias, was that, as the editors suggested, talking of rewriting history meant rewriting the oft-repeated declaration that the war ended with neither victors nor vanquished. That the war was "tied" had inspired negotiations to begin in earnest. It became the foundation of the post-Peace era and was a point of pride for many. When Funes insisted on rewriting history (even if he did not really do this), was he, at root, declaring the FMLN (presumably) to be the victors of the war, thereby bulldozing the foundation of the post-Peace era? The editors' statements could certainly be interpreted as a warning that this was what he was attempting to do, but the piece left readers to draw their own conclusions about it as the editors retreated to a more familiar focus on the preventative role truth could play in the future and on criticizing Funes for "stirring up the waters," as the editorial was titled. There are, it seems, surface truths and truths which lie beneath that surface, truths which require the waters to be stirred if they are to emerge. While the former prevented repetition, the latter would only lead to renewed conflict. The editors' truth was not Funes' below the surface truth, nor was it the human rights community's truth. Though the "facts" might have been the same, the editors' truth was a truth stripped of the passion and emotion which had inspired many activists to organize and fight for decades for the(ir) truth to be known and the fate of the disappeared to be discovered. It was a scientific truth, not a human one. But it was also not Ochoa Pérez's truth, which was nothing if not emotional. Calling for an impartial search for the truth (which would logically reveal an impartial truth) was also a rejection of Ochoa Pérez; how can calling anyone a hero be impartial?

Yet perhaps Funes' call for the military to revise its interpretation of history should not have caused such alarm. History is something that happened but really has little relevance for the present, or so it seems based on statements made by a range of public figures. By the time Funes spoke of history, some discursive groundwork had been laid which discounted the importance of history. For example, the US declassified thousands of documents in 1993 in the wake of a series of attacks on members of the FMLN, which was not yet a political party. The attacks had all the characteristics of having been carried out by death squads or similar "illegal armed groups." The

report about these documents confirmed the continued existence of death squads in post-Peace El Salvador. In addition to rejecting the report, Cristiani declared that it was not worthwhile to "investigate what happened in the past," as *El Diario de Hoy* wrote. The newspaper also quoted Cristiani as stating that, "We must waste neither ink nor saliva on questions of the past....the important thing is that [the past] does not happen again."⁶⁷ Perhaps if the report had concluded that illegal armed groups no longer existed in El Salvador (or that they never had existed), Cristiani's response would have been different.

Others repeated a similar type of discourse about history's lack of importance in the present. As he was parting ways with the FMLN in 1994, former guerrilla commander Joaquín Villalobos affirmed that the FMLN was not "politically viable" and should "become part of national history."⁶⁸ For Villalobos, history, like the FMLN, had no place in the present. President Antonio Saca repeated that sentiment in 2007. Declaring that the Peace Accords were *finiquito*, that they were finished, that all they required the government and FMLN to do had been done, he added that they were "already part of history."⁶⁹ To be part of history is clearly a sign that something is over, that it no longer has a place in the present, that it no longer matters. Marvin Galeas, former guerrilla and *El Diario de Hoy* columnist, made a similar point in his book, *Crónicas de Guerra*. He wrote that for his daughter and her generation, "prison and torture, the blood of students flowing on pavement..., the shadowy face under a hood, the angry, distant, and fanatical look above a bandana or ski mask, the terrible anguish of a mother who looks for her kidnapped or disappeared child are only things which adults sometimes talk about or which are mentioned in a Social Studies course in school. [They are] history. Things which happened some time ago."⁷⁰ While he believed that youth should know what happened, he argued that the emotions which often accompany a retelling of what happened in the past should remain in the past. The past, he said, should not poison the present.⁷¹

History is unimportant. It is something that is taught in school and can quickly be forgotten after the exam because it really does not matter. If this is the common attitude toward history, perhaps Funes' chose his words poorly; perhaps, rather than speaking of history, he

⁶⁷ "Informes EU no merecen credibilidad: Cristiani," *El Diario de Hoy*, 12 November 1993.

⁶⁸ "FMLN al borde de la desintegración," *El Diario de Hoy*, 7 December 1994.

⁶⁹ Mirma Jiménez, "Presidente Saca convencido que Acuerdos están finiquitos," *Diario Co-Latino*, 16 January 2007.

⁷⁰ Marvin Galeas, *Crónicas de Guerra: Para Contar la Guerra* (San Salvador: Editorial Cinco, 2008), 415.

⁷¹ Galeas, *Crónicas de Guerra*, 416.

ought to have spoken of something else, of memory or historical memory. Yet, at the same time, the word history is powerful. History is understood as something which does not change. It is *the* story of the past, something which even members of the military recognized, which is surely part of the reason why they resisted following Funes' instructions. Nevertheless, it is significant that students at the military institute might learn in a course about *the* history of the war that the military massacred civilians, that not all those that the military killed had taken up arms to "terrorize" the country and overthrow the government. This represents a shift in El Salvador, a shift which includes at least a partial re-evaluation of whose story—whose truth—should be the foundation of what Salvadorans know about their past.

Chapter Six

El Salvador and Guatemala: Contested Discourse

Olvidar, le dije, es amnesia o amnistía, es crear una sociedad sin historia. Es renegar de nosotros mismos. La tabula rasa es una tarea imposible. Siempre hay una huella que permanece vigente, sea como reflexión verdadera sea como fantasma que atormenta. Quienes dicen que sólo debemos ver hacia el futuro, quieren fundar una nación olvidadiza y sin historia, una nación que reniegue de sí misma, que se mutile. Sería un suicidio colectivo.
—Rafael Lara-Martínez¹

William Roseberry argues that moments of rupture are when "historical markers or monuments...provoke profoundly different meanings and memories for different groups within a social field." In these moments, the hegemonic process and the struggle over discourse are visible.² Steve Stern makes a similar point about memory knots, declaring that they inspire struggles between competing memories and provide a point of entry into understanding memory frameworks and how they are formed.³ This chapter explores two such moments of rupture: Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN, Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) president Mauricio Funes' 16 January 2012 request for *perdón* for the El Mozote massacre, and Guatemala's 2013 genocide trial of former head of state, Efraín Ríos Montt. Discussions about the past exploded in the public sphere at these moments, revealing how discourse works and how much, or little, it is possible to maneuver within the limits of pre-existing discursive/memory/truth frameworks.

When Funes was elected, the political dominance of Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA, Nationalist Republican Alliance) certainly ruptured, as did the government's treatment of the past. Funes' election marked a shift in the discourse emanating from the presidential palace, though this shift remained within the limits set by the larger discourse which pits truth against forgetting. In requests for *perdón*, the granting of awards and honors to significant human

¹ To forget, I told him, is amnesia or amnesty, it is to create a society without history. It is to repudiate ourselves. The tabula rasa is an impossible task. There is always a remnant that remains, whether it is as a true reflection or as a ghost that torments. Those who only say that we must look to the future want to found a forgetful nation, a nation without history, a nation that disowns itself, which mutilates itself. It would be collective suicide. (Lya Ayala, "De Azatlán a Cozcatlán," 3000: *suplemento cultural*, 14 January 2012.)

² William Roseberry, "Hegemony, Power, and Languages of Contention," in *The Politics of Difference: Ethnic Premises in a World of Power*, eds. Edwin N. Wilmsen and Patrick McAllister (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 82-3.

³ Steve J. Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 124.

rights activists, and the declaration of massacre sites as national patrimony, Funes administration officials increasingly mentioned the past and promoted the work that truth and memory do. As for conservatives, with mainstream media's help, they have continued to insist quite loudly on the truth of their truth and have maintained their own discourse regarding how best to achieve non-repetition and reconciliation (i.e., by forgetting). In this moment of rupture, the struggle over discourse is visible, as Funes pushes presidential discourse to be more like that of the human rights community. Conservatives' response is to push back, to insist on the work that forgetting does, lest their own discourse be consumed by one focusing on truth and memory.

Funes' announcement that he would travel to El Mozote to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the signing of the final Peace Accord and ask for *perdón* for the massacre generated much debate. This is at least partly due to the fact that his request for *perdón*, on that day, in that place, tangled the memory knot of El Mozote with that of the anniversary of the signing of the Peace Accord. In the process, the knots became more knotted, causing the social body to scream even louder. But also, when Funes asked for *perdón*, and recognized the state's responsibility for the massacre, the narrative of the conflict which emerged was distinct from the then-dominant, conservative historical narrative. Conservatives responded by loudly rejecting both Funes' particular truth and his focus on the work that truth does. Thus, when Funes asked for *perdón*, it is possible to see the different forces at work in El Salvador jockeying to be heard. In this moment, the contours and limits of El Salvador's post-Peace discourse are clearly visible.

Much the same can be said of the discussions that took place in Guatemala surrounding the 2013 genocide trial of Efraín Ríos Montt. It is important to note that the trial took place during the ultra conservative presidency of Otto Pérez Molina, who the human rights community also accuses of being a *genocidaire*. During the trial, and during Pérez Molina's administration more generally, debates about the past have become louder than ever before, and they are not only confined to newspapers, as seen below. The existence of a common discursive framework determined by the human rights community has meant that, except for a few outliers, few openly declare that forgetting will best work toward reconciliation and non-repetition. Instead, there has been much debate about the narrative truth of the conflict, about whether genocide was committed or not. In this discussion, conservatives insist that the narrative of the conflict should not include genocide, while the human rights community insists that it should. Both, therefore, promote their version of the truth.



"*Si hubo genocidio.*" "Kaibil President: whether you admit it or not, *si hubo genocidio.*"
6a Avenida. Zona 1. Ciudad de Guatemala. Photo by author. 21 May 2012.

The trial is certainly one of Roseberry's moments of rupture, as it is a memory knot. In the debate about the trial and about the question of genocide, the hegemonic struggle is clearly visible and the narrative of the war written. In these discussions about the past, different, fragmented groups promote their own views about genocide. Yet these discussions are also about the trial itself and about whether debates about the past are productive or destructive, about whether debate and the trial contribute to or prevent reconciliation. The debate about genocide also reveals the muddled nature of the discursive waters in Guatemala. Well-respected allies of the human rights community insisted on memory but also denied that genocide was committed and argued that the trial was divisive. They were attacked as a result. The hegemonic process revealed at these moments of rupture shows that common discursive frameworks police what can be said both externally and internally; these frameworks limit the language those who oppose them can use, while also determining the boundaries of what those who embrace them can say. In these discussions, it is possible to observe the narrative of the past being written, its boundaries pushed and then contracting once again.

Underlying the debates about the past are hopes to determine each country's respective memory, to dictate what Guatemalans or Salvadorans believe the truth of the conflict to be. This is hardly surprising. As Jacques Le Goff noted, determining what people know and remember (or

forget) about the past is "one of the great stakes...of dominated and dominating classes, all of them struggling for power or for life, for survival and for advancement."⁴ Yet limiting the range of truths, narratives, and memories about the past to only one endangers the goals of reconciliation and non-repetition that, in most cases, first inspired the search for "the truth."

El Salvador

Calls for memory (a memory rooted in "the truth," as opposed to amnesty and forgetting) and a more generalized recognition of human rights violations (both their truth and their place in the public sphere) increased significantly during Mauricio Funes' administration. As well, the truth/narrative of the past evident in Funes and the FMLN's words closely resembled the human rights community's truth of the war, as will be seen. Funes' election represented a moment of rupture in El Salvador. Yet it is important to keep the nature of the relationship between Funes, the FMLN, the victims, and the human rights community in mind while exploring Funes' discourse. While the human rights community certainly cheered Funes and the FMLN's victory, their relationship was not always close and easy. As Ralph Sprenkels argues, there is a general feeling of "disenchantment" with the FMLN and a feeling that the FMLN has sidelined the very organizations which supported it during the war and were, in some cases, its public face.⁵ Certainly the experience of the Comité de Madres y Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos y Asesinados Políticos de El Salvador "Monseñor Óscar Arnulfo Romero" (Co-Madres, Committee of Mothers and Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared and Political Victims "Monseñor Óscar Arnulfo Romero") and their campaign to be recognized as a non-profit organization points to this. While Co-Madres' status was finally awarded in 2013, in a conversation in 2012, a member of Co-Madres was highly critical of the delay, suggesting that the FMLM was little different from ARENA in its attitude to past human rights violations.⁶

⁴ Jacques le Goff, *History and Memory*, trans. Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 97-8.

⁵ Ralph Sprenkels, *The Price of Peace: The Human Rights Movement in Postwar El Salvador* (Amsterdam: Center for Latin American Studies and Documentation, 2005), 82-104.

⁶ "Gobernación entrega personería jurídica al Comité de Madres y Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos y Asesinados Políticos de El Salvador 'Monseñor Óscar Arnulfo Romero,'" Ministerio de Gobernación y Desarrollo Teritorial, 28 January 2013, http://www.gobernacion.gob.sv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=1:noticias-ciudadano&id=1541:gobernacion-entrega-personeria-juridica-al-comite-de-madres-y-familiares-de-detenidos-desaparecidos-y-asesinados-politicos-de-el-salvador-monsenor-oscar-arnulfo-romero&Itemid=77; Member of Co-Madres, interview with author, 7 May 2012.

Funes' own relationship with the FMLN was also tense and complex, and declarations that he was guided by the teaching and ideology of monseñor Romero were perhaps more important in determining his discourse than his ties to the FMLN.⁷ He was, in this, the first president to identify with the victims in some way.

Despite these tensions, the FMLN and Funes are very different from ARENA, and the past was more present in the public sphere than ever before. Yet the extent of the rupture with the past that Funes' election represented must not be over-stated. While the government's discourse shifted, the discursive contest between truth and forgetting which dominates El Salvador has not. Despite Funes' election, El Salvador has continued to discuss the past, and its importance in the present and future, in much the same way since 1992. ARENA, after all, is still very powerful, politically controlling significant portions of the country. The mainstream media is still owned by conservatives who are generally allied with ARENA and who continue to insist on amnesty and forgetting, and that the guerrilla committed just as many violations as the military.

Even so, it is undeniable that the discourse that rejects forgetting in favor of truth, memory, and historical memory is more present and powerful than ever before. Following Stern, El Salvador's emblematic memory is no longer what it was during 17 years of ARENA government. Stern, of course, underlined the non-permanent nature of emblematic memory as dominant memory frameworks lose influence and "dissident" emblematic memories become more mainstream and socially important. Stern pointed out that the shift in the dominant memory framework can only happen when dissident emblematic memories become more widely circulated, for example in the media.⁸ This certainly has happened in El Salvador since the FMLN came to power; since then, mainstream media has increasingly included government actions or declarations which echo the human rights community's discourse of truth, memory, and historical memory, as well as its narrative of the war, even if only to reject them.

In June 2012, the Office of the President published a news update titled "President Funes' government recognizes the truth and promotes reparation measures for the victims of the armed conflict." In this summary of the government's actions oriented toward recognizing the truth, the

⁷ See, for example, Fernando Romero, "Funes viaja hoy al Vaticano por causa de Óscar Arnulfo Romero," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 22 May 2013.

⁸ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 116.

Presidency affirmed that Funes' actions were "[u]nlike previous governments."⁹ The break with the past was repeated in other government publications. A few months earlier, for example, the Secretariat of Communications of the Office of the President published a special insert for the 20th anniversary of the Peace. "Leaving behind a past marked by the denial of what happened," the publication asserted, "the Salvadoran government is carrying out important efforts to rescue historical memory and spread the truth of what happened during the past armed conflict."¹⁰

Efforts to acknowledge and then spread the truth, to rescue historical memory, are evidence of a rupture with the past and include, among other things: Funes' recognition of the massacred Jesuits' legacy and granting El Salvador's highest honor to them; his recognition of the state's responsibility for serious human rights violations and abuses of power committed during the war, and his related request for *perdón* in 2010; his request for *perdón* in relation to Romero's assassination and the construction of a mural at San Salvador's international airport in Romero's honor; and the creation, by executive decree, of the Comisión Nacional de Búsqueda de Niños y Niñas Desaparecidas durante el Conflicto Armado Interno (National Commission for the Search for Children Disappeared during the Internal Armed Conflict).¹¹ As well, in 2011, on the 31st anniversary of the massacre at Las Aradas, Secretary of Culture Ramón Rivas confirmed his appreciation for grassroots efforts to "keep the historical memory of what happened alive." Declaring that what happened must not be forgotten so that it never happens again, he announced that he would work to get the massacre site officially declared part of El Salvador's cultural heritage, as the survivors wished. And it was the following year. Rivas added that declaring Las Aradas a cultural heritage site would help keep human rights violations in the country's historical memory.¹² Similarly, and also breaking with the past, the Monumento a la Memoria y la Verdad (Monument for Memory and Truth) was declared a protected heritage site and former director of

⁹ Presidencia de la República, "Gobierno del Presidente Funes reconoce la verdad e impulsa medidas de reparación a víctimas del conflicto armado," *Presidencia de la República*, 4 June 2012, <http://www.presidencia.gob.sv/index.php/novedades/noticias/item/2542-04-junio-2012/-gobierno-del-presidente-funes-reconoce-la-verdad-e-impulsa-medidas-de-reparaci%C3%B3n-a-v%C3%ADctimas-del-conflicto-armado.html>.

¹⁰ Secretaría de Comunicaciones de la Presidencia, "20 años de la firma de los Acuerdos de Paz," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 15 January 2012.

¹¹ Ibid.; Presidencia de la República, "Gobierno del Presidente Funes reconoce la verdad e impulsa medidas de reparación a víctimas del conflicto armado," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 15 January 2012.

¹² Ramón D. Rivas, "La masacre de Las Aradas, río Sumpul," *Diario Co-Latino*, 20 May 2011. This is so important because "heritage" is protected by the Heritage Law. ("Se declara Bien Cultural de la Nación al caserío Las Aradas, Chalatenango," 15 May 2012, <http://www.elsalvadornoticias.net/2012/05/15/declaran-bien-cultural-de-la-nacion-al-caserio-las-aradas-chalatenango/>.)

the Oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado de San Salvador (Tutela Legal, Archbishop of San Salvador's Legal Aid Office), María Julia Hernández, was posthumously honored for her work recovering historical memory.¹³ All of these things force open El Salvador's memory box.

It is difficult not to notice that the military or other state-sponsored security institutions are responsible for all of these violations; it was not the guerrilla who killed Romero or (generally speaking) stole children from their families. Thus, in the Funes' administration's imaginary, as in the human rights community's, rescuing historical memory and spreading the truth seem to only relate to the military's crimes. There is not much space for other memories or truths in *the* truth the Funes administration's new policies were dedicated to discovering. Yet as limiting as *the* truth the Funes administration embraced might be, it is, like the administration's policies which dealt with the past, very unlike previous governments' truth. Funes' truth is very clearly the same truth the human rights community has long championed. The same can be said of Funes' discourse more generally. Whereas previous presidents focused on the work that forgetting does, the Funes administration lauded the work that memory and truth do. In this, then, Funes and his discourse "belong" with that of the human rights community.

The struggle over discourse and the narrative of the war were on full display in debates related to Funes' 16 January 2012 speech celebrating the 20th anniversary of the signing of the final Peace Accord. The 16th of January is one of Stern's memory knots; it is a day when the past is very obviously present and where memories and visions of the past come into focus and conflict. The same can be said of El Mozote, and when these two knots intersect, the past is doubly present. Funes, as the editors of *Diario Co-Latino* described, began the day by declaring,

¹³ Laural Bernal, "Declaran Monumento a la Verdad y la Memoria como bien protegido," *Diario Co-Latino*, 15 March 2013, <http://www.diariocolatino.com/es/20130315/nacionales/113765/Declaran-Monumento-a-la-Verdad-y-la-Memoria-como-bien-protegido.htm?tpl=69>; "Presidente Funes rinde homenaje y condecora de forma póstuma a luchadora social María Julia Hernández," 21 November 2013, <http://www.transparenciaactiva.gob.sv/presidente-funes-rinde-homenaje-y-condecora-de-forma-postuma-a-luchadora-social-maria-julia-hernandez/>. This seems to have continued in the early weeks of former Funes Vice President Salvador Sánchez Ceren's administration. The PDDH congratulated the Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense (EAAF, Argentina Forensic Anthropology Team) for 30 years of work in support of human rights, "the search for the truth and the construction of historical memory" in various countries around the world, including in El Salvador. ("Procurador felicita a Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense por su trabajo realizado durante 30 años," 2 July 2014, <http://www.pddh.gob.sv/menupress/menuprensa/593-procurador-felicita-a-equipo-argentino-de-antropologia-forense-por-su-trabajo-realizado-durante-30-anos>) and the Corte Suprema de Justicia (CSJ, Supreme Court of Justice), which is not in fact part of the executive, acknowledged victims' right to truth in their ruling about the San Francisco Angulo massacre. (Sala de lo Constitucional de la Corte Suprema de Justicia, 5 February 2014, http://perso.unifr.ch/derechopenal/assets/files/jurisprudencia/j_20140408_01.pdf.)

"I am here in El Mozote to recognize the truth."¹⁴ He then directed the military to "revise their interpretation of history," as discussed in Chapter Five. He also made a formal request for *perdón* for the El Mozote massacre. An excerpt of his speech, accompanied by a child's drawing, was published in newspapers on the 17th.



El Mozote, never again: truth, justice and reparations for the victims.
Diario Co-Latino, 17 January 2012.

As head of State, I recognize that in the villages of El Mozote, El Pinalito, Ranchería, Los Toriles, Jocote Amarillo, Cerro Pando, La Joya, and Cerro Ortiz, during the days and nights of 11, 12, and 13 December 1981, soldiers from the Batallón de Infantería de Reacción Inmediata [(BIRI, Immediate Reaction Infantry Battalion)] Atlacatl, part of the Armed Forces of El Salvador, assassinated close to 1000 people, the majority boys and girls.

Endless acts of barbarity and human rights violations were committed here: innocents were tortured and executed; women and girls suffered sexual abuses and hundreds of

¹⁴ Editorial, "El Mozote y los 20 años del Acuerdo de Paz," *Diario Co-Latino*, 18 January 2012.

male and female Salvadorans are now part of a long list of disappeared, while others were forced to emigrate and lose everything to save their lives.

In the name of the Salvadoran State I ask the victims' families and nearby communities for *perdón* for this massacre, for the aberrant human rights violations and for the abuses committed.

Funes asked for *perdón* from all the victims and their relatives, highlighting that he did not seek to "erase the pain" they felt; rather, his request for *perdón* was meant to "recognize and dignify" the victims of "this tragedy."¹⁵ His speech also included a declaration that the Amnesty Law did not prevent the Attorney General's office from investigating human rights violations committed during the war.¹⁶

Funes' recognition of military responsibility, his recognition of Domingo Monterrosa's responsibility in particular, and his request for *perdón* are highly significant because they are an official recognition of the victims' truth/memory. This recognition is relevant in understanding why the human rights community did not reject his *perdón* as a way to promote forgetting, as similar groups did when Guatemalan president Álvaro Arzú asked for *perdón* in 1998. Though *perdón* was discursively tied to amnesty and forgetting in both countries, Funes' *perdón* is distinct from Arzú's because of Funes' previous actions and the timing of his words. Funes, for example, did not ask for *perdón* as a way to undermine the victims and survivors' truth, nor were other declarations he had made in support of memory in previous years weak and/or contradictory, as in Arzú's case.

But the difference between *perdón* in El Salvador and Guatemala also lies in how the presidents asked for *perdón*. When Arzú asked for *perdón*, and announced a larger movement for *perdón* and reconciliation (a reconciliation already tied to forgetting), he did so in relation to violence which Guatemalans suffered from "as a result of the decisions of political power and the actions of the army and of the security forces of the time," as *El Periódico* reported.¹⁷ His statement is vague, if not empty. He asked for *perdón* for everything, which might be just as pointless as not asking for *perdón* at all. Relatives and survivors repeat that, in order to *perdonar*, they have to know who was responsible. While Arzú recognized that political power and the

¹⁵ Gobierno de El Salvador, "El Mozote nunca más," *Diario Co-Latino*, 17 January 2012, paid ad.

¹⁶ Suchit Chávez, "Funes pide a FGR y CSJ investigar crímenes," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 17 January 2012.

¹⁷ Juan Carlos Llorca, "Un perdón a medias....," *El Periódico*, 30 December 1998; "Los discursos del perdón (extractos)," *El Periódico*, 30 December 1998.

security forces were ultimately responsible for the violence, these are faceless institutions. Relatives need names and faces; they need to know who killed their loved ones or razed their communities if they are to *perdonar*. In this regard, Funes was more specific. More than simply recognizing that the military had committed atrocities, he named names. He, the president, spoke the victims' truth out loud. He confirmed it, and they embraced him for it.

Funes' *perdón* is also not seen as a way to promote forgetting under the guise of memory and truth because he asked for *perdón*; he did not simply lament what happened. This is significant when compared to an earlier government's statements. On 2 June 1982, Erlinda and Ernestina Serrano Cruz were disappeared in rural Chalatenango, taken from their family by members of the Salvadoran army's elite Atlacatl Battalion (the same unit which Funes mentioned in his speech at El Mozote) during the military's *Operación Limpieza*, Operation Cleansing. Relatives and the Asociación Pro-Búsqueda de Niñas y Niños Desaparecidos, (Pro-Búsqueda, Pro-Search Association of Disappeared Children) brought the case to the Inter-American system in 1999. The Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH, Inter-American Human Rights Court) emitted a ruling in March 2005, condemning the state's lack of investigation and requiring the state to publicly "recognize responsibility" for the violations and to organize an act of *desagravio* "to repair the damage to the victims and their relatives and to prevent similar events from happening again."¹⁸ According to the Real Academia Española, an act of *desagravio* would either "erase or repair the offense, giving the offended party complete satisfaction" or "reimburse or compensate the damage which was caused." It is important to note that the CIDH's sentence did not require the state to ask for *perdón*. The media, however, reframed the discussion, a reframing which mirrored or was mirrored in relatives' words.¹⁹ In the public sphere, expectations that the state would ask for *perdón* determined Salvadorans' reactions to official statements.

The state, however, was clearly not going to ask for *perdón*. In " 'We are looking for children, not the guilty,' " Foreign Minister Francisco Laínez made this clear. He is quoted as saying, "It is lamentable that things like this (the disappearance of the Serrano Cruz sisters), which took place in the context of a war where the parties involved committed errors, happened."

¹⁸ CIDH, "Caso de las Hermanas Serrano Cruz vs. El Salvador: Sentencia de 1 de marzo de 2005," http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_120_esp.pdf, 99.

¹⁹ See, for example, Adriana Valle and Gabriel Labrador, "Estado pide perdón por desaparición de hermanas Serrano," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 22 March 2006.

In response to the journalists' question about the importance of "the request for *perdón*," he masterfully avoided saying the word and replied, "Recognizing that all Salvadoran families were involved in acts committed by one or the other side during the armed conflict reaffirms the need for peace and that what has been achieved by the process begun by the Accords should continue, be protected and preserved."²⁰ In addition to not uttering the word *perdón*, Laínez worked against the CIDH's ruling about the state's responsibility by repeating that the military was not the only one involved in the war and that both sides committed "errors."

When the moment came to speak, Laínez's said nothing about *perdón*. Accompanied by the president of the Corte Suprema de Justicia (CSJ, Supreme Court of Justice) and Procuradora para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (Ombudsperson for the Defense of Human Rights), Laínez stated that, "The State of El Salvador deeply laments all the events which took place during the armed conflict which prevailed in our country for more than 12 years and which directly affected all Salvadoran families, and first and foremost those [cases] which involved our youth. The state especially laments the events related to Erlinda and Ernestina Serrano Cruz."²¹ His lamentation is quite distinct from how the media described what would happen.

The difference between asking for *perdón* for the army's forced disappearance of two young girls (or even simply recognizing the state's responsibility) and lamenting all of what happened was not lost on those present at the ceremony. Relatives and members of the human rights community rejected Laínez's words; they shouted out that the state must ask for *perdón*.²² The following week, the Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas" (IDHUCA, Human Rights Institute of the Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas") and Pro-Búsqueda took out paid ads in *La Prensa Gráfica*. In the first ad, IDHUCA and Pro-Búsqueda pointed out the insufficiencies in Laínez's non-request for *perdón*, highlighting that, "To lament something does not mean that any kind of responsibility has been recognized."²³

²⁰ "Buscamos niños, no culpables," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 22 March 2006.

²¹ Adriana Valle, "Estado lamenta hechos ocurridos en la guerra," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 23 March 2006.

²² Ibid.

²³ IDHUCA and Pro-Búsqueda, "La dignidad de las víctimas no tiene precio, La burla oficial, sí," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 25 March 2006, paid ad. Pro-Búsqueda also criticized the government for organizing the act not as way to ask for *perdón*, but as a way to announce the reunion of the Hernández family. The family was separated in 1981 and the government's official Comisión Interinstitucional de Búsqueda de Niños y Niñas Desaparecidos a Consecuencia del Conflicto Armado en El Salvador (Interinstitutional Search Commission for Boys and Girls who Disappeared as a Result of the Armed Conflict in El Salvador) had worked to reunite them. After criticizing the Comisión Interinstitucional for working toward the reunion of children who had been

When Laínez did not ask for *perdón*, the process whereby the narrative of the past gets constructed is clearly visible. But more than this, the state's refusal to ask for *perdón* (even if this was not required by the CIDH), President Tony Saca's refusal to lament what happened himself, and human rights organizations' very vocal denunciation of both, added additional weight to the word *perdón*. They linked *perdón* to truth, to the perpetrators' acknowledgement of their own responsibility. Álvaro Saravia's request for *perdón*, made a few days after Laínez's lament, likely only strengthened the connection to truth. Saravia, a former officer in the Salvadoran military, asked for *perdón* in the *Miami Herald* for his role in Romero's assassination.²⁴ Saravia's request for *perdón* certainly stood in sharp contrast to the state's actions in the Serrano Cruz case. Not only was he asking for *perdón*, but in his request, the identity of one of the perpetrators was revealed. Thus, Saravia's request for *perdón*, like Funes' request six years later, revealed the truth of the past, a truth which the human rights community had long insisted must precede *perdón*.

Though *perdón* began its discursive career in El Salvador very clearly tied to amnesty and *olvido*, as in Guatemala, it was more closely tied to truth by the time Funes requested *perdón* in 2012. As a result, when Funes used the word, it was evidence of his solidarity with the victims. Certainly part of the transformation of *perdón* is related to the difference between granting *perdón* from above and asking for *perdón*, to the difference between granting pardon via amnesty and asking for a *perdón* tied to truth, a request which can presumably be denied. Yet, more than this, the government's 2006 decision to lament the war made *perdón* all the more important for survivors and the human rights community. As a result, when Funes began asking for *perdón* during his administration, not only for El Mozote but also for other human rights violations, the human rights community celebrated; while they may have preferred that requests

"involuntarily separated" from their families—phrasing which silenced the military's responsibility for forced disappearances—Pro-Búsqueda was quick to point out that this was the Comisión's only success story and that the celebration of this success served to "make [the relatives of the Serrano Cruz sisters and the real reason why the event had been organized] invisible." (Pro-Búsqueda, "El Estado de El Salvador no ha cumplido con las medidas de reparación ordenadas por la Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos en el caso de las hermanas Serrano Cruz," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 30 March 2006, paid ad.) *La Prensa Gráfica*'s reporting on the upcoming event in Chalatenango and the Hernández reunion had a similar effect. In the majority of the articles about the expected request for *perdón*, the focus was on the happy reunion of the Hernández family. This can be seen in the newspaper's first articles about the event, which appeared on 21 March 2006. Not only is the headline for the Serrano Cruz case smaller, but almost three-quarters of the space dedicated to the general theme of children disappeared during the war celebrated the reunion. The rest of the page was left for the "emblematic" Serrano Cruz case, a case which was, of course, ultimately the reason why the event had been organized. *La Prensa Gráfica* worked to visually, and not only vocally, make the Serrano Cruz girls disappear (once again).

²⁴ Adriana Valle, "Saravia pide perdón por homicidio de Romero," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 25 March 2006. He also announced he was writing a book which would reveal the names of others of those responsible for Romero's assassination.

for *perdón* come from the perpetrators themselves, and while they may have been critical of some of Funes' actions, and his inaction on other matters, they certainly did not reject his request for *perdón* or understand it to be his attempt to whitewash the past, to cover over the state's responsibility with a lament about the cruelty of war. Rather, they celebrated it as a long-overdue acknowledgement of truth and a step on the path toward reconciliation.²⁵

Conservatives, on the other hand, were critical of Funes. The debates about Funes' words help demonstrate how discursive frameworks are challenged and pushed to their limits, and show the process of narrative-making at work, as also seen in the previous chapter. The mayor of San Salvador, ARENA's Norman Quijano, for example, described asking for *perdón* on the anniversary of the Peace in El Mozote as being one-sided. He lamented the massacre, but added that the guerrilla also committed "excesses," just as the military had. Who, he wondered, would go to the sites of those violations and ask for *perdón*?²⁶ Retired officer Sigifredo Ochoa Pérez, then a member of ARENA and candidate for the Legislative Assembly, was the most vocal. As reported in *Diario Co-Latino*, he described Funes' words as "unfortunate" and as "opening wounds." He wondered if Funes wanted another war, "Given that his rant and false actions point to this." He asked what right Funes had to ask for *perdón* on behalf of the state, and wondered if Funes would ask for *perdón* for the "horrendous crimes" committed by the FMLN. He took to the internet to "dare the president"; there, he declared, "As a soldier, I am ready to defend our Patria." *La Prensa Gráfica* reported Ochoa Pérez as sending Funes the following message: "Mr. President, treat soldiers well. We are not your enemies." Speaking with the newspaper, Ochoa Pérez added that he believed that Funes should ask for *perdón* for the FMLN's crimes, which included using women, the elderly, and children as "shields" during the war.²⁷

²⁵ See for examples, Roberto Flores and Iván Escobar "'Este pedido de perdón no pretende borrar el dolor': Presidente Funes," *Diario Co-Latino*, 16 January 2012; Roberto Flores, "La desconocida sensación del perdón," *Diario Co-Latino*, 21 January 2012; Beatriz Castillo, "Pro Memoria Histórica insta a poder legislativo y judicial a promover la verdad," *Diario Co-Latino*, 18 January 2012; Natalia Zurlent, "Esther Alvarenga: '1932 se repite con mayor fuerza en 1980,'" *Diario Co-Latino*, 27 January 2012; Byron Sosa, "Iglesia católica avala acción de Funes," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 21 January 2012. For officials' reactions, see Zoraya Urbina, "Procurador Luna: 'fue una actitud valiente la del Presidente,'" *Diario Co-Latino*, 17 January 2012; Zoraya Urbina, "Presidente de la Asamblea: 'reconciliación debe basarse en la verdad y la justicia,'" *Diario Co-Latino*, 19 January 2012; Hugo Martínez, "Nuestro compromiso con la verdad, la justicia y la reparación de las víctimas," *Diario Co-Latino*, 23 January 2012.

²⁶ Amílcar Mejía and Valeria Menjívar, "Alcaldía conmemora en el Obelisco de la Paz," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 17 January 2012.

²⁷ Zoraya Urbina, "Ochoa Pérez reta al presidente Funes," *Diario Co-Latino*, 17 January 2012; Diana Verónica Ayala, "Funes también debería pedir perdón por las masacres del FMLN," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 19 January 2012. Sigfrido Reyes argued that it was, in fact, Funes' place to ask for *perdón* on the state's behalf. He was, after all,

Priscilla Hayner's views on truth and reconciliation are useful to consider. She argued that rather than focusing on finding *the* truth about the past, truth commissions should promote a view of reconciliation based on "a generally agreed understanding of a country's history and past wrongs," an understanding based on the acceptance of certain fundamental facts as true.²⁸ Funes is, of course, not a truth commission, but his (and conservatives') views about *the* truth of the past certainly are similar to the ideas of truth that guide truth commissions. Hayner offers several guidelines, in the form of questions, to help measure whether a society is moving toward reconciliation. They are helpful in thinking about the different truths debated in 2012. The third question is most interesting here. She asks, "Is there one version of the past, or many?" Reconciliation, she concludes, "means not only reestablishing friendly relations, but reconciling contradictory facts or stories, 'to make (discordant facts, statements, etc.) consistent, accordant, or compatible with each other,' " as the *Oxford English Dictionary* explains.²⁹ Hayner does not suggest which fundamental facts must be understood to be true, nor which contradictory stories must be reconciled. Lisa J. Laplante and Kelly Phenicie offer more detail about this. They argue that consensus about the past should be rooted in the belief that "(1) human rights violations occurred, and (2) they were morally and legally wrong."³⁰

Consensus, however, which Laplante and Phenicie point to as essential in transitional societies, is not universally lauded. Mark Osiel's comments on consensus—or rather, on dissensus—are relevant. Osiel argues that "civil dissension" can play an important role in growing "solidarity in a deeply divided society."³¹ Paul Ricoeur, who draws on Osiel in his own work, promotes the usefulness of dissensus and of allowing competing memories to be heard. Ricoeur warns against the passage of amnesties and the promotion of other initiatives which seek to forget conflict and division for the sake of national unity. Instead, he promotes dissensus, discussion, and debate.³² In Ofelia Ferrán's words, Ricoeur advises against insisting that

head of state, a state with "historical continuity" since independence in the early nineteenth century. (Zoraya Urbina, "Presidente de la Asamblea: 'reconciliación debe basarse en la verdad y la justicia,'" *Diario Co-Latino*, 19 January 2012.)

²⁸ Priscilla B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 160 and 163.

²⁹ Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths*, 161-2.

³⁰ Lisa J. Laplante and Kelly Phenicie, "Media, Trials and Truth Commissions: 'Mediating' Reconciliation in Peru's Transitional Justice Process," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 4 (2010): 227.

³¹ Mark Osiel, *Mass Atrocity, Collective Memory, and the Law* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 51-3.

³² Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of

everyone agree on a particular issue and reconcile with one another lest it get in the way of "the development of appropriate venues for the emergence of a fruitful and healthy practice of controversy....where competing claims and views about the past can be presented in the name of a healthy dialogue, and not as political weapons against others."³³ Elizabeth Jelin also addresses the issue of consensus. Like Osiel and Ricoeur, she cautions against those who hope to make sure that a single memory—i.e. their own—be recognized as the only valid "interpretation or narrative of the past."³⁴ Instead, she argues for creating "legitimate spaces for expression and controversy about different memories," for creating "multiple spaces for debate." For Jelin, democracy entails the "recognition of plurality and conflict more than the hope for reconciliation, silences, or erasures by fiat." The caveat, however, is that conflict "has to be anchored strongly in the rule of law."³⁵

By asking for *perdón* and recognizing the state's responsibility for the massacre, as well as by instructing the military to revise its history, rename the barracks in San Miguel after someone other than Domingo Monterrosa, and stop honoring perpetrators as heroes, Funes was working to re-write the narrative of the war. Yet he was not creating spaces for or necessarily encouraging debate. He was attempting to impose one narrative/truth of the past on the military and on society. His comments about recognizing *the* truth and his instructions to the military resemble silence or erasure by fiat. Funes was hardly the first to seek to impose one truth on the past. The human rights community had long insisted on the existence of one truth, as had conservatives. And in 2012, conservatives worked hard to reject Funes' truth and prevent their own narrative from being rewritten. Other than the players involved, little had changed since the Truth Commission report was published. But in his declarations, Funes was also pushing the limits of El Salvador's public discourse. Conservative reaction, as seen in this and the previous chapter, was swift and strong. Mainstream media and conservative politicians and other public figures rallied against him. The military ignored his instructions to stop honoring Monterrosa. In this, the limits of El Salvador's discourse are revealed and the boundaries of the relevance of the past in the present, as well as the battle lines, are firmly drawn. As head of state, Funes could ask

Chicago Press, 200), 452-3.

³³ Ofelia Ferrán, *Working through Memory: Writing and Remembrance in Contemporary Spanish Narrative* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 41-2.

³⁴ Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*, trans. Judy Rein and Marcial Godoy-Anativia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 19 and 33-4.

³⁵ Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*, 104-5

for *perdón* for various atrocities, recognize the work of human rights activists, promote the work of truth in guaranteeing non-repetition, and insist on the military's responsibility for human rights violations; as important as these things were, this was all he could do. He could not fundamentally change the discourse of those who have consistently embraced forgetting as ensuring non-repetition. Despite being head of state, he could not make the military do what it did not want to do; he could not force the military to re-remember the war. This reveals not only the limits of discourse, but also the limits of Funes' power.³⁶

While Funes may have over-stepped the boundaries of El Salvador's discursive framework when he gave instructions to the military, he seemed to recognize both the boundaries of discourse and the limits on his power when he did not insist that the Amnesty Law be revoked. Rather, he declared that there was nothing in the Amnesty Law which prevented the Attorney General's office from investigating human rights violations committed during the war. Even though he described attempts to revoke the Amnesty Law as "valid," and reminded Salvadorans that the law had been declared unconstitutional, he did not take any action himself.³⁷ Promoting the truth of the war and the work truth does is one thing. It is something else entirely to take concrete, legislative steps to liberate the truth, to unshackle it from the Amnesty Law, and to allow it to actually work *for* non-repetition. In his decision not to work to revoke the Amnesty Law, the grey areas between the black and white descriptions of different sectors' discourse are revealed. While Funes may have embraced the truth of the human rights community and their view on the work of truth and memory, he nevertheless did not echo their discourse in its entirety. The human rights community took note and criticized Funes as a result. They wanted him to be fully on the side of truth and memory and not located somewhere in between these and forgetting, perhaps because they failed to see what truth could accomplish if it were not accompanied by justice.

Guatemala

The trial against Efraín Ríos Montt and his chief of intelligence, Mauricio Rodríguez Sánchez, began on 19 March 2013. Ríos Montt was found guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity and condemned to 80 years in prison on 13 May 2013. Rodríguez Sánchez was

³⁶ Mauricio Gaborit, in conversation with the author, 8 November 2013.

³⁷ Fernando Romero, Amadeo Cabrera, and María José Saavedra, "Funes ordena reescribir la historia a la luz de la masacre de El Mozote," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 17 January 2012.

absolved. The sentence against Ríos Montt, however, was overturned on a technicality soon after. In the months the trial lasted, and in the aftermath of the court's rulings, the public sphere exploded with debate about the past, and different sectors' emblematic memories were clearly visible. Much of this discussion had to do with the question of whether genocide had been committed in Guatemala or not, but it also related to the usefulness of the trial and the effect it and a guilty verdict would have on Guatemala. In the back and forth between the human rights community and conservatives, and among members of each group, in the heated series of assertions and counter-assertions, the process of how narratives are created is revealed, as are the complexity and fluidity of group membership. Revealed as well is some of the space that exists between the discursive binary of memory versus forgetting.

Rather than arguing that Guatemalans must forget the conflict, those who opposed the trial argued that genocide had not been committed in Guatemala. They limited themselves to promoting a different truth, a different memory of the conflict, as Mario Mérida and others had before them. The several publications of the ultra right-wing Fundación contra el Terrorismo (Foundation against Terrorism) offer ample evidence of this. In "The Church's Marxist Conspiracy," the fourth installment of their series, "The Farce of Genocide in Guatemala," the Fundación affirmed that their hope was to "contribute to establishing the historical truth" of the conflict, for, "The world deserves to know the truth!" For the Fundación, it was important to know *the* truth of the past, a truth the guerrilla and leftists had hidden in an attempt to "manipulate national and international public opinion with their lies and falsehoods." Spreading the truth of the conflict—that is, the Fundación's version of the truth, a truth about which the title of their publications leaves little doubt—is essential. Without this truth, "authentic national reconciliation" would be impossible; without this truth, subsequent generations would only know the "slanted and compromised Marxist version" of the conflict, where the military committed genocide.³⁸ The Fundación's truth is that the guerrilla, and specifically the Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres (EGP, Army of the Poor), were terrorists and that *they* had committed genocide. What could the approximately 60 massacres of indigenous peoples, including Mam who were members of a group who refused to join the EGP in Ixtahuacán, be, if not genocide? What could

³⁸ Fundación contra el Terrorismo, "La Farsa del Genocidio en Guatemala: Conspiración Marxista desde la Iglesia Católica," *El Periódico*, 26 May 2013, paid ad, 2.

the guerrilla's assassination of an Ixil spiritual leader and members of *cofradías* be, if not genocide?³⁹

In their embrace of a truth distinct from that of the human rights community, the Fundación is much like other conservatives. However, though the Fundación rejected the human rights community's truth, as did other conservatives, their truths are not identical, revealing the heterogeneity of "conservatives." The Fundación's insistence that the guerrilla committed genocide—that *si hubo genocidio*, that yes, there was genocide—fits to some extent with broader conservative discourse which focuses on the guerrilla's responsibility for violations. It also, however, stands in stark contrast to other conservatives' even stronger and more frequently repeated declarations that *no hubo genocidio en Guatemala*, that there was no genocide in Guatemala.



A condensed version of the UN definition of genocide:
"The total or partial extermination of an ethnic group"
Photo by author. 4 October 2013.

³⁹ Fundación contra el Terrorismo, "Conspiración Marxista desde la Iglesia Católica," 5 and 8-9.

The declarations of Zury Ríos, one of her father's greatest champions, are a good example of how important it was that *no hubo genocidio*. *El Periódico* published an excerpt of an interview Ríos had given to the online Salvadoran newspaper, *El Faro*, shortly after the trial started. In addition to reminding readers that the Ixil had voted for her father many times in the post-Peace era (and so *no hubo genocidio*), she declared that the dead were guerrillas and that this was why they had been killed, not because they were indigenous (and so *no hubo genocidio*). Those who wrote the definition on the wall in downtown Guatemala City, above, seem to have disagreed. In response to the journalist's comment that she spoke of "all the victims as if they had all been guerrillas," even the many children who died, Ríos confirmed that indeed many children had died and then asked her own clearly rhetorical question: "And who recruited them? Who put them at the front?"⁴⁰ The answer was obvious: the guerrilla. They, too, committed crimes during the conflict (and so *no hubo genocidio*).

The conservative, pro-business Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras (CACIF, Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial, and Financial Associations) also weighed in on the issue. In a news update published on their webpage, CACIF declared that thousands of "*campesinos*, workers, businesspeople, students, ladinos, indigenous peoples, soldiers, guerrillas..." died, regardless of their "origin, social background, race or religion." Given this, CACIF affirmed that it was impossible to declare that there had ever been an attempt to eliminate a particular race, an assertion they repeated in paid ads in newspapers. *No hubo genocidio*, they concluded.⁴¹

Lest it be imagined that only non-indigenous Guatemalans deny genocide, it must be noted that CACIF has some indigenous members, further adding to the fractured nature of the discursive environment in Guatemala. While many assume that the Ixil who arrived in Guatemala City to insist that *no hubo genocidio* were paid, and even tricked, by Ríos Montt's supporters,⁴² it is more difficult to suggest that this is the case with indigenous members of

⁴⁰ E. De León and C. Mejía, "Se inicia juicio histórico por genocidio contra Ríos Montt," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 19 March 2013; "Zuri [sic] Ríos: 'No hubo genocidio,'" *Siglo Veintiuno*, 19 March 2013.

⁴¹ CACIF, "¡Ahora dicen que los guatemaltecos somos genocidas!" 19 March 2013, http://www.cacif.org.gt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1059&Itemid=468&lang=es. CACIF's use of "acts of violence" to talk about violence which took place in the armed conflict is interesting. The CEH had carefully categorized the state's violence as human rights violations and the guerrilla's crimes as "acts of violence." This raises the question of whether CACIF used the phrase intentionally, to underscore the guerrilla's actions without naming them. See also, CACIF, "CACIF llama a Corte de Constitucionalidad a preservar gobernabilidad y futuro del país," *El Periódico*, 13 May 2013, paid ad.

⁴² See, for example, HIJOS Guatemala, Radio Guerrilla, and US journalist Xení Garden's facebook and twitter

CACIF. Instead, it is clear that not all indigenous people believe that genocide was committed during the conflict.⁴³ That not all indigenous people agree on this issue is not unexpected, for there are conservative and leftist indigenous people, just as there are conservative and leftist non-indigenous people.⁴⁴

Returning to the issue of genocide, it is easy to assume that, when conservatives, such as the members of CACIF, affirmed that *no hubo genocidio*, they meant that the state had not committed genocide against its own people as part of the counterinsurgency campaign. It is easy to imagine that *no hubo genocidio* meant that, as Ríos said, the military had killed indigenous Guatemalans because they were members of the guerrilla, not because they were indigenous. But as an emblematic framework which sorts memories into true and false, into remembered and forgotten, *no hubo genocidio* is vague. Though a perpetrator is implied, *no hubo genocidio* does not name one. As a result, the Fundación's comments that *si hubo genocidio* but that the guerrilla were responsible are not only in opposition to the human rights community's insistence that *si hubo genocidio* and that the state was responsible; they are also in opposition to other conservatives' declarations that, quite simply, *no hubo genocidio*.

Conservative Guatemala is not monolithic. *No hubo genocidio* is some conservatives' truth, and it is a truth that generally acknowledges that the military committed violations, but not genocide. This truth, this emblematic memory, is unlike that of the human rights community, which is also not monolithic. Not all believe in the truth the CEH revealed; not all are guided by the assertion that *si hubo genocidio*. Former Secretary of the Peace, Raquel Zelaya, who also signed many of the Peace Accords for the government; Gustavo Porras, former guerrilla and member of the government's negotiating team in the 1990s; and Marta Altolaguirre, former president of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, declared on 16 April 2013 that *no hubo genocidio*. They are important political figures; while more conservative than most in the human rights community,⁴⁵ they had, in the past, shown a commitment to protecting human

feeds from 23 April 2013. These sources report that, when asked what the banners they were holding said, the women holding them admitted that they could not read. The sign declared that genocide was a lie.

⁴³ David Stoll has made this point at various times in his career, though his assertions to this effect tend to generate much debate and are often rejected. David Stoll, *Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); David Stoll, "Guatemala—Was it Genocide?" 31 October 2013, <http://sites.middlebury.edu/dstoll/files/2013/10/Guatemala-Was-It-Genocide.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Greg Grandin has discussed the diversity of indigenous political or ideological outlooks in depth in *The Blood of Guatemala*, though the focus of the book is not on the years of the conflict.

⁴⁵ Edelberto Torres-Rivas describes them as in being in the political center. (Edelberto Torres-Rivas, "Torres-Rivas responde al campo pagado de los ex funcionarios de Arzú," *Plaza Pública*, 17 April 2013,

rights. Yet, in "Traicionar la paz y dividir a Guatemala," Zelaya, Porras, Altolaguirre, and others ventured outside the human rights community's emblematic memory. They rejected the truth of the CEH and the larger human rights community, revealing the fissures in what often seems like a homogenous group. The authors asserted that "the accusation of genocide" might lead to "a heightening of social and political polarization." This is the "dividing Guatemala" part of the title of the ad. They then argued that if the trial were to continue, it would facilitate the return of political violence, and so would mean that the goals of the peace had been "betrayed," as in the first half of the title. The authors concluded that their warning did not mean that "the atrocities which took place during the internal armed confrontation should not be known," or that the victims did not have the right to begin legal procedures against those responsible. Nevertheless, *no hubo genocidio*. "The accusation of genocide is a legal fabrication"; furthermore, it does not "correspond to the wishes of the majority of the population to overcome the past and to find national reconciliation."⁴⁶

How can it be that the trial would heighten polarization and facilitate repetition, but that the victims have a right to begin judicial proceedings against the perpetrators? How could they want the past to be known, but also oppose the trial, where, presumably, the events of the past would be revealed, where at least the judicial truth of the past would become clear? The Zelaya group's comments seem contradictory. They did, however, clarify some of their comments in the next ad they took out, "Commitment to the truth and peace." Published nine days later as a response to criticisms from other members of the human rights community, which will be discussed below, the ad reiterated the point that the signers *did* want the past to be known. They also repeated their belief that genocide had not been committed, but clarified that it was because the conflict had been political, ideological, and economic, and not ethnic. In this, the apparent contradictions of their previous ad were explained. They were opposed to the trial because, as they argued, a trial for a crime which had not been committed would "create a social and political situation which would affect coexistence" in Guatemala. This view allowed them to

[http://www.plazapublica.com.gt/content/torres-rivas-responde-al-campo-pagado-de-los-ex-funcionarios-de-arzu.\)](http://www.plazapublica.com.gt/content/torres-rivas-responde-al-campo-pagado-de-los-ex-funcionarios-de-arzu.)

⁴⁶ Luis Flores Asturias, Eduardo Stein Barillas, Gustavo Porras, Raquel Zelaya, Richard Aitkenhead, Adrián Zapata, Arabella Castro de Paiz, Rodolfo Mendoza, Marta Altolaguirre, Marco Tulio Sosa, Mariano Ventura Zamora, and José Eljandro Arévalo Alburez, "Traicionar la paz y dividir a Guatemala," *El Periódico*, 16 April 2013, paid ad.

oppose the trial while still supporting the victims' "legitimate, undeniable, and inalienable" right to truth and justice (for crimes other than genocide)⁴⁷

As mentioned above, many in the human rights community were critical of "Traicionar la paz y dividir a Guatemala." They rejected its conclusion about genocide, as well as the idea that the trial would lead to instability and threaten the peace. These are linked. To argue that genocide had not been committed in Guatemala was understood to be the equivalent of promoting continued impunity. The Ley de Reconciliación Nacional had specifically excluded genocide from amnesty; to declare that the deaths of 1771 Ixil was not genocide meant that the perpetrators could seek protection from prosecution, thereby perpetuating impunity.

Helen Mack, her niece Lucrecia Hernández Mack, Manolo Vela Castañeda, publisher Raúl Figueroa Sartí, some relatives of the victims, and journalists and contributors to various non-mainstream media outlets, decided to take out their own ad, "True peace is born from justice." After affirming that acts of genocide had indeed been committed in Guatemala, as the CEH had concluded, the Mack group asserted that justice "is not a threat." The trial, they insisted, would not facilitate the return of political violence, as the Zelaya group had suggested. Rather, if the past returned, it would be because "inequality, racism, exclusion, poverty, and conflict" still exist, despite the social and economic reforms and attempts to "rescue historical memory" included in the Peace Accords. Indeed, far from allowing for a return to political violence, the trial was an opportunity to "strengthen the justice system." It was, they wrote, a chance to show "the country's capacity to build a future of democracy and peace." They concluded, "If we want reconciliation, we will have to know and condemn the unjust acts of the past and those who perpetrated [them] and give voice to the victims."⁴⁸ Justice would only do Guatemala good.

In the original ad and in the Mack group's reaction to it, it becomes clear that the human rights community is not a single, unified group with a unitary narrative of the conflict. When the limits of the narrative were challenged, when a truth emerged that challenged the emblematic memory that *si hubo genocidio*, even when this alternative narrative/truth was put forward by

⁴⁷ Luis Flores Asturias, Eduardo Stein Barillas, Gustavo Porras, Raquel Zelaya, Richard Aitkenhead, Adrián Zapata, Arabella Castro de Paiz, Rodolfo Mendoza, Marta Altolaguirre, Marco Tulio Sosa, Mariano Ventura Zamora, and José Eljandro Arévalo Alburez, "Compromiso con la verdad y la paz," *El Periódico*, 25 April 2013, paid ad.

⁴⁸ Helen Mack, Juan Pensamiento Velasco, Karen Ponciano, Karin Slowing Umaña, Lucrecia Hernández Mack, Manolo Vela Castañeda, and Raúl Figueroa Sartí, "La verdadera paz nace de justicia," *Prensa Libre*, 22 April 2013, paid ad.

allies and did not deny that many thousands had been killed or that the state was responsible, the broader human rights community stood firm in their belief that there was only one way to understand the violence. To argue that *no hubo genocidio* was unthinkable.

In many ways, the human rights community's rejection of "Traicionar la paz y dividir a Guatemala" was inevitable. Emblematic memory, which most clearly emerges at moments of rupture to give meaning to trauma, "also creates a framework for organizing countermemory and debate."⁴⁹ How could the human rights community, which operates within a framework that *si hubo genocidio*, not have rejected the Zelaya group's countermemory completely? They had been arguing against conservative declarations that the state had not committed genocide for many years. They had also had to deal with conservatives' efforts to stall and derail trials for human rights violations committed during the conflict and, of course, very real threats made against those who sought justice for those crimes. Zelaya and her co-signers' views fit right into conservatives' emblematic (counter)memory and their opposition to justice and so *had* to be rejected, no matter what else they said that fit into the discursive framework of *nunca más*. Emblematic memory allows little room for nuance. Thus, *si hubo genocidio* is *the* truth of the past;⁵⁰ it is the only possible truth and the human rights community is quick to rally against its own, to discursively "police" or scold them, when they suggest otherwise.

The rejection of countermemory can also be seen in the ad a second group of human rights activists and their allies, including Rosalina Tuyuc; former director of the Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos (CALDH, Center for Legal Action in Human Rights), Frank La Rue; Rigoberta Menchú; highly respected academic, Edelberto Torres-Rivas; CEH commissioner Otilia Lux de Cotí; and Bishop Álvaro Ramazini placed in *El Periódico*. In "There

⁴⁹ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 106-7.

⁵⁰ The truth of the human rights community, as well as its discursive framework, received a boost from the judges' 718-page sentence. For those who might not read the entire sentence, newspapers published extracts of it, presumably what they viewed as the most important parts. *Prensa Libre*, for example quoted the judges' affirmation that "We firmly believe that recognizing the truth will help to heal the wounds of the past" and that justice must precede peace. (Luis Ángel Sas, "Extractos del veredicto contra Efraín Ríos Montt," *Prensa Libre*, 12 May 2013, http://www.prensalibre.com/noticias/justicia/Extractos-veredicto-Rios-Montt_0_917908232.html.) "The truth" they mentioned was, of course, that Ríos Montt was responsible for genocide, and it was this truth they believed would lead to reconciliation. In addition to concluding that genocide had been committed, the judges strengthened the human rights community's discourse and truth by entering Remhi and the CEH as evidence with "probative value." (Organismo Judicial, Sentencia, C-01076-2011-00015, 662-3.) By affirming the reports' probative value, by affirming that Guatemala's recuperated historical memory and the country's clarified history were evidence of Ríos Montt's guilt, the judges were legally and officially declaring the reports to be the truth of the conflict, thereby confirming what the human rights community had always insisted.

is no peace without truth and justice," the Tuyuc group began by rejecting the idea that seeking justice, as they interpreted the Zelaya group's words, might have negative consequences. Seeking justice, they wrote, is a right enshrined in the Guatemalan Constitution and in international law. The signers then went on to refute the Zelaya group's arguments point by point. They argued, in particular, that demanding justice is the "fundamental basis of all democracies." Thus, "To ask for justice...can NEVER be interpreted as an act of destabilization." The Tuyuc group declared that reconciliation "does not entail the irresponsible action of seeking to forget the past; on the contrary, it involves fully coming to terms with its consequences as a requirement for building a different future." Part of this involved the Guatemalan state recognizing what happened in the past, as in Germany, Bosnia, Rwanda.⁵¹

The Tuyuc group understood the Zelaya group to be embracing conservatives' countermemory of the violence and promoting forgetting when they called for reconciliation and suggested that justice for a non-existent crime would divide Guatemala. Words are malleable, and reconciliation can certainly mean forgetting in one instance, and can have a foundation of memory in another, when someone else speaks of it. After all, the Tuyuc group did also argue for



"Justice for genocide." Discussions of genocide were not confined to during Ríos Montt's trial. Parque Central. Guatemala City. Photos by author. 28 February 2012.

⁵¹ Frank La Rue, Rigoberta Menchú, Rosalina Tuyuc, Edelberto Torres-Rivas, Otilia Luz de Cotí, Oscar Azmitia, Yuri Giovanni Melini, Anabella Giracca, Carlos Sartí, Carolina Escobar Sartí, Fernando Valdez, Mons. Álvaro Ramazini, Mons. Julio Cabrera, "No existe paz sin verdad y justicia," *El Periódico*, 18 April 2013, paid ad.

the importance of reconciliation. Even so, the larger human rights community's rejection of the Zelaya group's genocide denial and critique of justice in relation to that crime, as seen very clearly in the photos above which demand justice for genocide, is similar to how they had understood and reacted to conservative discourse over the years. All of this points to a lack of open dialogue about the past in Guatemala, a tendency certainly not confined to the human rights community. Other sectors and their inflammatory language, quoted above, and threats against those with a different truth also point to an inability to discuss what happened, and suggest that Guatemala remains unreconciled.

Edelberto Torres-Rivas' views on debate are interesting to consider. In his initial response to "Traicionar la paz y dividir a Guatemala," published in *Plaza Pública*, he was firmly in favor of the trial and debates about genocide, declaring that these were "the beginning of a process which should eliminate the hate and rancor which divide us."⁵² He was critical of Guatemala's "culture of monologue" and argued that, as reported in *Prensa Libre*, "The fact that, for the first time in public, people speak in favor and against the genocide, in favor or against the trial, speaks well of democracy in Guatemala." It was not an indication, he said, of conflict. Yet as much as Torres-Rivas supports a culture of debate, he also seems to reject it. This can be seen when he says, "it is lamentable that these illustrious Guatemalans...see the defense of the historical truth as dangerous."⁵³ How can this statement be reconciled with sadness about Guatemala's culture of monologue? How can you reject a culture of monologue but still insist that there is one historical truth?

Torres-Rivas was, as well, among the first to write against "Traicionar la paz y dividir a Guatemala"; his response did not encourage debate. It was personal⁵⁴ and silenced other views of the past and the trial. Despite his comments about eliminating hate and rancor, he wrote that "perhaps, because there are 12 [signers of "Traicionar la paz...," who he also called apostles] there is a Judas amongst them who wrote a short text, but one full of errors and mistakes." These comments work to further divide Guatemala, and point to a binary view of society as divided between evil and good. He continued that if "the 12 apostles" really believe that the debate about genocide "betrays the peace and divides Guatemala," they "will soon be among the ranks of the

⁵² Torres-Rivas, "Torres-Rivas responde al campo pagado de los ex funcionarios de Arzú."

⁵³ "Edelberto Torres Rivas: Guatemala no tiene cultura de debate," *Prensa Libre*, 18 April 2013.

⁵⁴ Though not writing about him, the Mack group's comments seem to apply. They wrote, "In the last weeks, the citizenry has seen itself immersed in a strong, though necessary, debate about the genocide trial. However, more than arguing about the merits of the case, the attacks have been personal."

right, holding the veterans' bloody hand."⁵⁵ In this final statement, it seems clear that the real problem he has with the Zelaya group is that they do not support debate. But at the same time, there is little space to disagree with Torres-Rivas. If you do, in a bifurcated view of Guatemala where your thoughts on whether there was or was not genocide are the determining factor in group membership (or so it seems), you are no longer one of "us" but one of them, one of "the veterans" of the Fundación contra el Terrorismo. It is not always easy to distinguish between those who deny genocide for ideological reasons, like "the veterans," and those who deny it for more thoughtful reasons. The words they speak are often very similar. In order to defend memory, knowing, justice, and debate, it is, perhaps, best to group them together and approach them both as if they were foes, not friends.

Torres-Rivas, however, does not fit neatly into only one category, at least in terms of his views on genocide. Those views, it must be noted, are not the most important or insightful aspects of his writing. In 2012 he declared that in the end, "the name does not matter. It happened" and "the truth, moral reparations, [and] the recognition that excesses were committed" were necessary so that it does not happen again.⁵⁶ Discussions about the trial, however, show that it mattered very much, both for conservatives and the human rights community. Both groups, and those who fell in the cracks in between, were passionate about the issue, declaring as loudly and as often as they could either that *si hubo genocidio* (and so the amnesty did not apply) or that *no hubo genocidio* (and so it might). Indeed, Torres-Rivas himself found the question of what to call the violence quite significant. How an individual answered the question of whether genocide was or was not committed in Guatemala was of the utmost importance in the months surrounding the trial, and the question itself was the focus of much discussion in the public sphere, as seen above. As a result, his views on the issue will be explored here.

Torres-Rivas has characterized the conflict in a range of different ways over the years. He seems at times to be searching for a third way to understand the violence, to construct a third emblematic memory which could perhaps bridge some of the divide between the other two. He signed "There is no peace without truth and justice" with Tuyuc and the others which placed Guatemala in the same category as Germany, Bosnia, and Rwanda. This was not the first time the comparison had been made. He had, in 1999, repeated this when he described the conflict as

⁵⁵ Torres-Rivas, "Torres-Rivas responde al campo pagado de los ex funcionarios de Arzú."

⁵⁶ Edelberto Torres-Rivas, "¿En Guatemala hubo genocidio?," *El Periódico*, 23 September 2012, <https://web.archive.org/web/20121112035814/http://elperiodico.com.gt/es/20120923//218262>.

"the Guatemalan Holocaust."⁵⁷ He confirmed much the same idea in his initial response to "Traicionar la paz y dividir a Guatemala," published in *Plaza Pública*. He wrote that "ferocity does not qualify as genocide, but the logic of hate and rancor against racial, religious, and ethnic groups does. In this sense, acts of genocide were committed in the Ixcán and Ixíl."⁵⁸

Yet his declaration that *si hubo genocidio* stands in contrast to his views on genocide published in an opinion piece in *El Periódico* in September 2012. Torres-Rivas begins "Was there genocide in Guatemala?" by declaring, "In Guatemala, *no hubo genocidio*, but something worse." This "something worse" was the "the systematic persecution" of leftists, "their relatives and friends, of the suspect and, in the final stage, of indigenous communities which had to be destroyed to end the 'danger': international communism's far-reaching plot." He went on to talk about persecution based on fear and hate, mentioning religious persecution and the Holocaust before moving on to discuss political persecution. In Guatemala, "Homicidal persecution..., as an expression of inter-group violence, was committed in large measure to punish a way of believing, of seeing society, of thinking about it." "Killing because someone thinks differently," he added, "is another type of genocide," and this, too, would have been included in the Convention had the Soviets not opposed it.⁵⁹

By insisting that politically inspired killing is also genocide, Torres-Rivas refuses to fall into the binary debate about genocide that revolves around why people were killed, about the intent behind the military's actions. Unlike the Zelaya group and most of the human rights community, Torres-Rivas pushes the boundaries of the discourse by expanding the definition of genocide. Of course proposing an alternate definition of genocide, while possibly useful in the long term, does little in the short term. In the short term, lawyers must use the laws that already exist. Though Torres-Rivas does propose an alternative narrative of the violence, he also participates in debates about *si hubo genocidio* or *no hubo genocidio* to take a firm stand against those who seek to use *no hubo genocidio* to promote forgetting and impunity. In this and in his declarations that the Zelaya group was little different than the Fundación contra el Terrorismo,

⁵⁷ Edelberto Torres-Rivas, "Guatemala: la memoria histórica a prueba, reflexiones sobre la muerte, la verdad y el olvido," *Revista Memoria* 121 (March 1999), 49.

⁵⁸ Edelberto Torres-Rivas, "Torres-Rivas responde al campo pagado de los ex funcionarios de Arzú." *Prensa Libre* published a few of his comments about the trial and the debate it was generating the next day. He is quoted, rather confusingly, as saying that "We do not know if genocide was committed or not." In cases of genocide, it was essential to determine who was responsible and "this, without a doubt, was the army." ("Edelberto Torres Rivas: Guatemala no tiene cultura de debate.")

⁵⁹ Torres-Rivas, "¿En Guatemala hubo genocidio?"

he is pulled into the divisiveness inherent in Guatemala's competing emblematic frameworks. Consensus and dissensus are useful to consider here. It is during these very public debates that the limits of the narrative of the past are challenged and defined, but these debates could also be the ideal opportunity to work to reconcile "contradictory facts or stories," as Hayner wrote.⁶⁰ Torres-Rivas might, at times, be trying to do just that, but his and others' words also at times resemble a series of attacks, accusations, and assertions. It seems unlikely that these will reconcile facts, stories, memories, or people.

The same can be said of the passage of Punto Resolutivo 3-2014. Luis Fernando Pérez and Pedro Gálvez, both of the Partido Republicano Institucional (PRI, Institutional Republican Party), proposed the non-binding resolution. President Otto Pérez Molina's Partido Patriota (PP, Patriot Party) was seemingly not involved in the framing of the bill, though all the PP's representatives supported it.⁶¹ The Punto Resolutivo declared, "it is not legally viable that the elements that constitute the crimes mentioned could have happened in Guatemala, principally with regard to the existence in our homeland of a genocide during the internal armed conflict."⁶² With this meandering language, lawmakers denied that genocide had been committed in the country, as newspapers translated for their readers. *Siglo Veintiuno*, for example, reported on the resolution in "Congress denies genocide in Guatemala." *Prensa Libre* reported on it in "Punto Resolutivo that denies genocide approved."⁶³ Yet this denial of genocide was only one sentence among many, the rest of which were based on the belief that the state was responsible for "promot[ing] and facilitat[ing] peaceful coexistence." Given that the trial had increased

⁶⁰ Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths*, 161-2.

⁶¹ It must not be forgotten that Pérez Molina is identified with the perpetrators of gross human rights violations, as seen in the graffiti calling him the "assassin president" and the "Kaibil president." As well, documentary evidence and video footage show him in the Ixil triangle in the early 1980s, standing over a row of dead bodies. That the "Trial of the Century" took place during his presidency added to the atmosphere of debate, especially since he had denied that genocide had been committed in 2011 (Martín Rodríguez Pellecer, " 'Quiero que alguien me demuestre que hubo genocidio,' " *Plaza Pública*, 25 July 2011, <http://www.plazapublica.com.gt/content/quiero-que-alguien-me-demuestre-que-hubo-genocidio>), in 2013 ("Pérez Molina insiste que en Guatemala no hubo genocidio," *Emisoras Unidas*, 10 May 2013, <http://noticias.emisorasunidas.com/noticias/nacionales/perez-molina-insiste-que-guatemala-no-hubo-genocidio>) and again in 2015 ("No hubo genocidio en Guatemala, sostiene presidente Pérez Molina," 7 January 2015, http://www.nacion.com/mundo/centroamerica/genocidio-Guatemala-presidente-Perez-Molina_0_1462053787.html).

⁶² "IACHR Urges Guatemala to Continue Complying with its International Obligations and Fighting against Impunity," 16 May 2014, http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2014/058.asp.

⁶³ "Aprueban punto resolutivo que niega genocidio en Guatemala," *Prensa Libre*, 13 May 2014, http://www.prensalibre.com/noticias/justicia/diputados-aprueban-punto_resolutivo-negaria-genocidio-Guatemala_0_1137486508.html; "Congreso niega genocidio en Guatemala," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 13 May 2014, <http://m.s21.com.gt/nacionales/2014/05/13/congreso-aprueba-punto-resolutivo-que-niega-existencia-genocidio>.

"polarization between brothers, fostering conditions that are counter to peace and which prevent a definitive national reconciliation," the lawmakers "urged" the Executive to continue to work in favor of and defend "the spirit of reconciliation" which had originally inspired the passage of the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional and the signing of the Peace Accords.⁶⁴

The Punto Resolutivo passed on 13 May 2014, shortly after the first anniversary of Ríos Montt's conviction. The previous year, the judges had made history by turning Guatemala into the first country to try and condemn its own leaders for genocide in domestic courts. The judges also helped to support the CEH's official version of the conflict by concluding that the Ixil had been victims of acts of genocide, and that Ríos Montt was responsible. In addition, hoping to contribute to a reinterpretation of history, the judges declared 23 March, the day Ríos Montt had taken power, the Día Contra el Genocidio, the Day Against Genocide. With this, the judges were shifting the meaning of the day to focus on the victims and to promote *nunca más*, so that "never again" would have a very present place in the public sphere. With the overturning of the verdict, this shift was reversed. Furthermore, in 2014, a conservative Congress wrote over the importance of 10 May by claiming 13 May as its own, as the day that genocide was not committed.

Just like the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional, Congress's resolution is little more than legislated forgetting.⁶⁵ In the name of reconciliation, the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional prevented trials from taking place for a range of political crimes and common crimes connected to political crimes. Notably, genocide, torture, and crimes against humanity were excluded from the amnesty. As Ricoeur suggests, amnesties such as the Ley de Reconciliación Nacional force a more general forgetting of the crimes amnestied, and not just punishment for them. In Guatemala, this means that the crimes (except genocide, torture, and crimes against humanity) never happened. Inspired by the spirit of reconciliation, the Punto Resolutivo, however, further limits the number of crimes which did, in fact, happen to two: torture and crimes against

⁶⁴ Punto Resolutivo 3-2014, proposed 24 April 2014.

⁶⁵ Significantly, in terms of the discursive framework, even if Aristedes Crespo, president of the Congress, "invited the floor [i.e. Congress] to forget the past," the Punto Resolutivo did not call for forgetting. ("Congreso niega genocidio en Guatemala," *Siglo Veintiuno*, 13 May 2014, <http://m.s21.com.gt/nacionales/2014/05/13/congreso-aprueba-punto-resolutivo-que-niega-existencia-genocidio>.) To do so would perhaps have been too much; it would have been starting a completely new painting, instead of simply painting over one image/memory/narrative with another. Thus, it seems that Guatemala's common discursive framework remains, though Congress was certainly pushing the discourse to the limits with their legislated denial of genocide, their approval of a truth which ran counter to the CEH and human rights community's truth, and, of course, with Crespo's explicit call for forgetting.

humanity.⁶⁶ With this official statement about genocide, which represents a shift in the official position regarding genocide from silence to denial, genocide is forgotten; it is written out of the historical narrative.⁶⁷ The Punto Resolutivo, however, was non-binding and had no judicial consequences. As a result, it did not prevent Guatemalan courts from beginning a second trial against Ríos Montt and Rodríguez Sánchez in January 2015. The second genocide trial was suspended on the first day since, as the defense argued, the fact that one of the judges had written a thesis about genocide disqualified her from presiding over the trial.⁶⁸

Ironically, of course, the resolution did not silence the question of genocide. Rather, it had the opposite effect, keeping the question of genocide alive in the public sphere. Nevertheless, with the resolution, the aim was to convert Guatemala from a country where genocide had been committed⁶⁹ into a country where genocide most definitely had not happened. With this, lawmakers hoped to whitewash the stain on the country's past, just as the denunciation of Pérez Molina, where street artists declared that neither the Ixil nor the Ixcán forget "the assassin president," was whitewashed. Denying genocide, thus, becomes the new official narrative of Guatemala's past.

The debate surrounding Funes' instructions to the military and request for *perdón* and the genocide trial bring to mind Stern's comments that "the most dynamic forms of cultural and political debate about memory often take place as a context over the primacy or 'truth' of rival emblematic memories, in a competitive process to establish which frameworks will displace

⁶⁶ Interestingly, more than one commentator seemed not to be bothered that crimes against humanity had been committed in Guatemala. The real issue was genocide. *Prensa Libre* columnist and self-described "lover of liberty and technology," Jorge Jacobs, for example, argued that *no hubo genocidio* because "the intention" aspect of the definition of genocide, which was the key to determining if genocide had been committed or not, not the "acts" themselves, was absent in Guatemala. "Without this intention," he wrote, "these acts can be categorized as crimes against humanity, but not as genocide," and should be punished. (Jorge Jacobs A., "Cuál genocidio," *Prensa Libre*, 16 May 2013.)

⁶⁷ In February 2009, Mexican newspaper *La Jornada* reported that Colom asked for forgiveness from the victims of the armed conflict and recognized that what happened in Guatemala was, in fact, genocide. ("En Guatemala 'hubo genocidio, etnocidio y destrucción de líderes', admite Álvaro Colom," *La Jornada*, 26 February 2006, <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2009/02/26/mundo/027n1mun>.) In Guatemala, however, this recognition of genocide went unmentioned. See, for example, "Demandan cumplimiento en entrega de resarcimiento," *Prensa Libre*, 26 February 2009.

⁶⁸ Claudio Palacios, "Se suspendió inicio de juicio por genocidio tras recusación a jueza," *La Hora*, 5 January 2015, <http://lahora.gt/se-suspendio-inicio-de-juicio-por-genocidio-tras-recusacion-jueza/>.

⁶⁹ This of course, exaggerates the previous "official" version of the past, i.e. the CEH's. The CEH had only concluded that acts of genocide had been committed at certain times against certain groups, including the Ixil.

others and approach a hegemonic cultural influence."⁷⁰ Given the explosion of passionate debate about Funes' *perdón* and the question of genocide in Guatemala, and the vocal and often abusive rejection of the other side's views, reaching an agreement about the truth of the conflicts, and sometimes even their most basic features, seems a far-off goal. Indeed, perhaps the existence of such obviously divergent truths was what compelled Funes to instruct the military to rewrite its interpretation of history and Guatemalan activists to propose criminalizing genocide denial in the first place, as they did shortly after the 2013 verdict. This latter, of course, was before lawmakers managed to pass the Punto Resolutivo officially denying genocide. The Cámara Guatemalteca de Periodismo (CGP, Guatemalan Chamber of Journalism) and many conservative commentators decried CALDH's proposal criminalizing the denial of genocide as limiting freedom of expression. Frank La Rue, former director of CALDH, offered a more thoughtful reaction. From his position as the UN's Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, he recognized that freedom of expression could only be limited to protect the human rights of others, which was not the case in Guatemala; it is impossible to see debates about history as "damaging." As a result, "statements in favor of or against historical events cannot be prohibited." Nevertheless, he wrote, countries like Germany and Austria had made denying the Holocaust a serious crime in an attempt to "guarantee that the people do not forget historical errors and so there is no chance that they are repeated in the future."⁷¹ Following this logic, passing an official resolution, even if it is non-binding, which denies genocide has the effect of allowing people to forget, if not forcing them to forget, by dictating that the absence of genocide is a central component of the official narrative of the past.

La Rue's comment about debating the past not being polarizing (to adopt the word those who penned the Punto Resolutivo used to describe the effects of the trial and discussion about genocide) is interesting. To say these debates are not polarizing points to a belief that it is beneficial to talk about what happened in history, even if that history is very recent and its pro- and antagonists are still alive (who is who, of course, depends on one's point of view). La Rue's comment also suggests that efforts to find the one truth of the past and put forward one narrative of a country's history are, at best, misguided. What is forgotten or forcibly silenced in these initiatives are memories and events that do not fit into the overarching narrative, leading to the

⁷⁰ Stern, *Remembering Pinochet's Chile*, 106-7

⁷¹ Frank LaRue, "Libertad de expresión y libertad de opinión," *Prensa Libre*, 21 May 2013.

writing of a unitary historical narrative based on a rather simple and un-nuanced understanding of the past, often in the name of reconciliation.

As Ricoeur, La Rue, and others affirm, debate and discussion about the past are not things to avoid at all costs. Indeed, should this almost obsessive search for the one truth of the past be successful, the results would likely be disastrous. Not only would a society not achieve reconciliation, but the goal of non-repetition would remain out of reach as dissent is quashed with extreme violence. Transitional societies, and transitional justice mechanisms, must focus on the verb reconciling (both people and stories) and not the noun reconciliation. Figuring out, through dialogue and debate, what the "generally agreed understanding" of the past is will do more to reconcile a society than imposing a narrative of the past on that society. It is when the past forces its way into the present that reconciling will be most effective, if only the different sectors would stop and listen to what the social body is screaming out.

Chapter Seven

El Salvador and Guatemala: The Two Burials of El Salvador's Dead, and Unburying Guatemala's

In Guatemala, history is not dead, but many exhumations are needed.
-Graffiti. 2a Calle. Zona 2. Ciudad de Guatemala.

Calling for a complete rejection of communism in favor of "the *patria*/homeland," the militaristic march of the Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA, Nationalist Republican Alliance) is best sung at full volume. The lyrics declare, "El Salvador will be the tomb where the reds will be finished off." In this way, America would be saved.¹ A tomb—this was certainly what El Salvador became. El Salvador was a tomb for the tens of thousands of Salvadorans buried in unmarked graves, in mass graves, in police stations, thrown from the heights of the Puerta del Diablo (Devil's Door) outside of San Salvador, or who simply vanished. Their secrets—the truth of what had happened to them—were buried or vanished with them. The right continued to bury in the post-Peace era. Its discourse silences what the victims and survivors knew had happened, burying all of it not under a(nother) layer of dirt, but under layers of bureaucratic red tape.

There are (at least) two layers of official forgetting in El Salvador: forgetting via burying the dead in unmarked graves or burning the bodies of massacred children, and forgetting via amnesty. Following this logic, if the victims have been forgotten twice, their bodies buried twice, with progressive sectors and human rights organizations protesting both burials throughout, then it follows that they need to be exhumed twice. The first (metaphorical) exhumation involves officially remembering the dead, remembering that El Salvador suffered through at least 12 years of repression and violence and that tens of thousands were killed. To do this, the Amnesty Law must be revoked. After this initial remembering (again, on the official level, for there is little forgetting in communities), very real, dirty exhumations can take place, for what is the point of digging up a field where nothing happened?

Though several actual exhumations have taken place in El Salvador, most notably the series of exhumations conducted with the assistance of the Equipo Argentino de Antropología

¹ Alianza Republicana Nacionalista, "Marcha de ARENA," *Alianza Republicana Nacionalista*, 3 November 2011, <http://www.arena.org.sv/marcha-de-arena.html>. Interesting, the song also included lyrics which stated that "liberty will be written with blood," recognizing that there would be many victims on both sides.

Forense (EAAF, Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team) at El Mozote, there is no official policy of exhuming the war-dead in El Salvador, nor is there a non-governmental organization dedicated specifically to exhumations. Exhumations of the victims of wartime violations and post-Peace crime are the responsibility of the Instituto de Medicina Legal (Institute of Legal Medicine), an over-worked state institution that is part of the judicial system. While Guatemala also lacks an official state policy of exhuming the dead, various non-governmental organizations have taken charge of this work, most notably the Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (FAFG, Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala) created in part by the EAAF, which conducted the first scientific exhumation in Guatemala in 1991²; thousands of remains have been unearthed in the decades since.

The reasons the Salvadoran and Guatemalan states might not actively promote exhumations are obvious. Yet exhumations might actually facilitate the state's operations. Exhumations undertaken in Guatemala serve to make cemeteries legible to the state, allowing the state to properly sort its citizens into categories and facilitate the incorporation of citizens into the state's operation. With exhumations, in a manner that recalls Foucault's "art of government"—"the way in which one conducts the conduct of men"³—Guatemalans have been incorporated into the more mundane and bureaucratic facets of the state and its operation. Exhumations help to embed the state in the everyday lives of its citizens, from the initial denunciation to the Ministerio Público (MP, Public Ministry) that a clandestine cemetery exists, to the issuing of death certificates and marriage licenses and the filling out of paperwork so the dead can receive a proper burial. Exploring exhumations and the work of the exhumers from a framework which incorporates legibility and the art of government offers insight into the way that exhumations allow the state to control the behavior of Guatemalans, both in life and in death, and point to ways that the Salvadoran state might also benefit from a similar process.

One final point is necessary. Burying is paradoxical. Burying helps ease the pain and anger relatives often feel at not having been able to properly bury their dead. These emotions are buried under layers of dirt; they are forgotten, helping relatives find some closure. Burials can help ease relatives' pain by covering up the body so that the dead can rest peacefully. They are a

² A member of the Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador (CDHES, Human Rights Commission of El Salvador) suggested that Salvadoran NGOs, like the CDHES, receive much less funding than Guatemalan NGOs because there was no genocide committed in El Salvador. (Conversation with author, 29 May 2012.)

³ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79*, ed. Michel Sellenart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 186 and 1-2.

way to protect the body from the elements and scavengers. This last issue is why many of those who gave testimony to Guatemala's Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico (CEH, Historical Clarification Commission) and Proyecto Interdiocesano de Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica (Remhi Project, Interdiocesan Project for the Recuperation of Historical Memory) were so saddened about the fate of loved ones whose bodies had been tossed by the side of the road like animals.⁴ Yet burying also turns a piece of earth into a place where relatives can go to remember, and graves serve as a permanent reminder of the past. Another way that burials are paradoxical is that, in addition to hiding the bodies from the weather, burying also covers up less literally. Burying covers up or conceals the crimes of the past, and responsibility for those crimes. Thus, covering up or burying (the evidence of a crime) can protect the perpetrators from prosecution and prison. In this, relatives' desire to properly bury the dead and the state's wish to leave the dead buried coincide, at least partially.

But to properly bury the dead, they must first be unburied. They must be exhumed. Exhuming reveals and uncovers—the remains, the story of the victim's death, and responsibility for her death. As a result, many oppose exhuming. Yet after unburying comes reburying, which can prompt forgetting. For when the bones remain in the earth, scattered in fields and forests and absent, they can be a powerful indictment of what happened. This absence refuses to be forgotten. It will be many years before the dead and disappeared of either country have all been exhumed, all the more so because the number to exhume continues to rise in the violence of the era of "peace." One wonders if, once all the bones have been unburied, given back their name, and reburied, forgetting will be that much easier.

Burying the Past in El Salvador

The right buried the past in a few ways in post-Peace El Salvador. Some commentators and journalists threw handfuls of dirt in the open grave where the remains of the past lay by simply insisting that the past be buried. Alvaro Sánchez wrote in *La Prensa Gráfica* in May 1992 that Salvadorans only wanted to "live and work in peace, without the threats that make them remember the years of destruction and death" which the country experienced from the early

⁴ See, for example, Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, *Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio*, Volume 4, *Consecuencias y Efectos de la Violencia* (Guatemala City: Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, 1999), 24.

1980s. "This era of terror," he said, "should be buried forever."⁵ The following year, Ernesto Valiente Durán wrote a piece about the soon-to-be published report of the Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador. Demonstrating his lack of faith in men, he placed all his faith in God. He commented that only God was "capable of making a Truth Commission where all are given a fair sentence." "It is better," he wrote, that the men "down here concern ourselves with the future and that we bury the past deep, once and for all."⁶ In a piece published at the end of 1992, *La Prensa Gráfica's* editors wrote, "Terrible things took place during this war which we are trying to bury in a dark corner of our history."⁷

The conservative media focused much of its energy on simply not writing about the human rights violations committed during the war, and more specifically, on not writing about the ones attributed to the military. The conservative media further silenced (and buried) the deaths in the post-Peace era by denying them a place in the public sphere.⁸ Talking vaguely about the "terrible things [that] took place during the war" is one way to silence the victims. So is limiting the list of "terrible things" to crimes that already had a place in the public sphere and to the "terrorist acts" of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN, Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front).⁹ Conservative media were also well-versed in the art of omission and confusion, which further buried/silenced the victims. For example, conservative media generally only mentioned death squads to deny their existence, failed to say who had assassinated Rutilio Grande, did not say why the military's elite Batallones de Infantería de Reacción Inmediata (BIRI, Immediate Reaction Infantry Battalions) were demobilized after the war, suggested that the bombing of Federación Nacional Sindical de Trabajadores Salvadoreños (FENASTRAS, National Trade Union Federation of Salvadorian Workers) might have been a result of an internal purge, and commented that the "rebels" were responsible for the massacre during monseñor Romero's funeral.¹⁰ More than twenty years of silencing, omitting, and misinforming buried the victims and what had happened to them.

⁵ Alvaro L. Sánchez, "Acuerdos de paz no son objeto negociable," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 6 May 1992.

⁶ Ernesto Valiente Durán, "Esto sí da miedo!!" *La Prensa Gráfica*, 4 March 1993.

⁷ Editorial, "Las secuelas internas del conflicto," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 29 December 1992.

⁸ *Diario Co-Latino* does much the same.

⁹ The list includes the FMLN's killing of US soldiers riding in a helicopter the guerrilla shot down, the kidnapping of Inés Duarte, the destruction of infrastructure, the assassinations of Roque Dalton and Melinda Anaya Montes, and the Zona Rosa massacre. As for the military's crimes, these include the El Mozote and Sumpul massacres, the Jesuit massacre, the rape and assassination of four US religious women (who were often not described as having been raped), and the assassination of monseñor Romero.

¹⁰ See, for example, "Laboratorio de ideologías," *El Diario de Hoy*, 26 May 1999; "Mensaje pronunciado por el

Yet, despite these post-Peace attempts to bury the past, exhumations have been conducted in El Salvador. According to the Centro para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos "Madeleine Lagadec" (CPDH, Center for the Promotion of Human Rights "Madeleine Lagadec"), 546 exhumations were conducted before 2006.¹¹ These include exhumations at Las Aradas, Río Sapullo, Guadalupe-Tenango, Palo Grande, and Santa Rosita.¹² The most significant exhumation was conducted at El Mozote and nearby communities where close to 1000 civilians had been killed in 1981.¹³ The initial push to exhume the dead came from organizations in Morazán. In 1989, these organizations asked the Oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado de San Salvador (Tutela Legal, Archbishop of San Salvador's Legal Aid Office) to investigate the massacre. The following year (and so before either of the Amnesty Laws were passed), after concluding that the army had massacred hundreds of Salvadorans, Tutela Legal, on behalf of several survivors, began a lawsuit against the army. As part of the evidence gathering process, they planned to conduct exhumations of the mass graves and invited the EAAF to El Salvador to assist. The Argentines spent some months in the country, but local judges and other officials in the justice system did not allow the exhumations to take place. Tutela Legal invited the EAAF to El Salvador again shortly after the Peace Accords were signed. Some preliminary investigations were carried out and mass graves identified, but once again, permission to exhume was denied. By September, however, the situation had changed. The Truth Commission began operating and appointed the EAAF as technical consultants.¹⁴ They would be the ones to help to "research the

Señor Presidente de la República, Lic. Alfredo Cristiani, al presidir la ceremonia de desmovilización del Batallón de Infantería de Reacción Inmediata 'Atlatcatl, ' " *La Prensa Gráfica*, 11 December 1992; Enrique Altamiro, "Reagan: partero de una nueva era," *El Diario de Hoy*, 13 June 2004. Some of this brings to mind the military's strategy of covering up responsibility for crimes during the war, such as when they spray-painted FMLN slogans on the walls of the Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas" (UCA, Central American University "José Simeón Cañas") after killing the Jesuits to throw blame on the guerrilla.

¹¹ Comisión para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos "Madeleine Lagadec," *Informe de Investigación Temática: La Experiencia del CPDH "Madeleine Lagadec" en el Acompañamiento a Familiares de Víctimas en la Exigencia de Sus Derechos* (San Salvador, 2006), 35.

¹² "Iniciarán exhumación a víctimas en el Sumpul," *Diario Co-Latino*, 18 January 2010; "Delegación de La Paz participa en proceso de exhumación de víctimas de masacre," *El Defensor del Pueblo* 35 (April 2011), 15; Comisión de Trabajo en Derechos Humanos Pro Memoria Histórica de El Salvador, "A diez años de los acuerdos de paz: la verdad resurge de la tierra, recordando el pasado y advirtiendo nuestro futuro," *Diario Co-Latino*, 16 January 2002, paid ad.

¹³ Leigh Binford's *The El Mozote Massacre: Anthropology and Human Rights* (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1996) offers an in-depth discussion of the exhumation.

¹⁴ Luis Fondebrider and Mercedes Doretti, "Forensics," in *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, vol. 1, ed. Dinah Shelton (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), <http://find.galegroup.com/gic/infomark.do?&source=gale&idigest=003cdad854f3479a09e7dd1aac53b235&prodId=GIC&userGroupName=23mbss&tabID=T001&docId=CX3434600140&type=retrieve&contentSet=EBKS>

death of various people" around El Mozote, as *La Prensa Gráfica* described what had happened there.¹⁵

The exhumation began on 13 October 1992 and was limited to a building known as "the Convent," which had been badly burned at the time of the massacre. For the month the exhumation lasted, *La Prensa Gráfica* offered readers a macabre account of the progress: three skulls found so far...18 skulls and remains...56 skulls and a fetus...76 skulls and a fetus.¹⁶ In total, the forensic anthropologists uncovered 143 remains. One hundred thirty six were under 12 years old. Forensic analysis of the remains and bullet fragments also recovered confirmed the survivors' story. The army had massacred local residents. The dead had not been killed in a confrontation between two sides, as the military had insisted.¹⁷

The next exhumation was not conducted until 2000. Though the Truth Commission promoted continued investigations into violations committed during the war, the Amnesty Law was understood to prevent investigations into the past. From 1992 to 2000, the bones remained where they were, impatiently waiting to be exhumed and reburied in proper graves. During this time, as the EAAF's Luis Fondebrider and Mercedes Doretti, who were involved in the original exhumation, relate, relatives continued to insist that exhumations be carried out. Their efforts finally paid off in 2000 when their request was approved "on humanitarian grounds." Trials, of course, were "ruled out." Exhumations conducted between 2000 and 2004 brought the total number of remains to at least 281 individuals.¹⁸

The need for more exhumations remained. In 2012, the Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH, Inter-American Human Rights Court) condemned El Salvador for working against exhumations and its general failure to investigate the massacre. The Court ruled that El Salvador must continue to exhume the dead, as part of the relatives' right to know what had happened to their loved ones. The CIDH further recognized that burying the dead would allow the living to "close the process of mourning which they have been living for many long years."

&version=1.0. See also: Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, "Caso Masacres de El Mozote y Lugares Aledaños Vs. El Salvador: Sentencia de 25 de octubre de 2012, (Fondo, Reparaciones y Costas)," http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_252_esp.pdf.

¹⁵ "Piden a Justicia gestione ante países ayuda en Caso El Mozote," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 15 September 1992.

¹⁶ "Varias osamentas hallan en El Mozote," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 18 October 1992; "18 cráneos y osamentas localizan en EL Mozote," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 19 October 1992; "Fiscalía y colaboradores activos en exhumaciones de El Mozote," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 25 October 1992; "Encuentra 76 cráneos en excavaciones de El Mozote," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 11 November 1992.

¹⁷ Fondebrider and Doretti, "Forensics" and CIDH, "Caso Masacres de El Mozote," 91.

¹⁸ CIDH, "Caso Masacres de El Mozote," 93-5 and 56-8.

Finally, the Court concluded that the exhumation could also reveal important information to help "clarify" what happened and identify the perpetrators. In the El Mozote ruling, the Court also pointed out that the local court in Morazán, responsible for allowing exhumations, understood the Amnesty as putting an end to all investigations into the past.¹⁹ Discussions about the new series of exhumations, as recommended by the CIDH, began in 2014. By the end of July, amidst debate about whether the EAAF or Medicina Legal would conduct the exhumation, little had been done to actually open the graves.²⁰

As seen in the CIDH ruling, the state, in the form of the judiciary, was reluctant to allow the exhumation to take place. Judges continually placed obstacles to the exhumation and other investigations in 1991 and 1992.²¹ This included, as seen above, refusing to grant permission to exhume. The executive also created obstacles. President Cristiani, for example, declared in 1993 that they had not been able to find any records related to who might have been serving in the Atlacatl Battalion at that time. In 1981, he pointed out, a de facto government was running the country, suggesting this government did not keep good records; as well, the military was undergoing restructuring. The records simply have not been found, he stated, and "we cannot invent information."²² More than this, however, Tutela Legal reported in internal memos that the judge in Morazán had told them "he had superior orders to delay and block the investigation." These orders came from Cristiani, the president of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General, and the Minister of Defense. These delaying tactics included not setting a date to begin the exhumations, as seen above, but also making rumors that the area was mined seem credible.²³

Despite the state's best efforts, and likely only because of the presence of the Truth Commission in the country, the exhumation did eventually begin. Yet the right would not admit defeat in the battle over the memory of the war so easily. Even as the bones were being unearthed, some continued to try to insist that the victims had been killed in a confrontation

¹⁹ CIDH, "Caso Masacre de El Mozote," 127-9. The Court, it should be noted, has consistently ruled that the Amnesty Law must be overturned. The link between the Amnesty and the exhumations was also mentioned in 2000, at least in *Diario Co-Latino*. See, for example, Santiago Leiva, "Reiniciarán exhumaciones de masacrados en El Mozote," *Diario Co-Latino*, 11 April 2000; Gloria Silvia Orellana, "Dignificación de las víctimas del conflicto armado mediante las exhumaciones," *Diario Co-Latino*, 24 April 2000. The lack of funding was also cited as a reason the exhumation stopped.

²⁰ José Mejía, "Fiscalía iniciaría un nuevo proceso judicial en caso masacre El Mozote," *Transparencia Activa*, 24 July 2014. <http://www.transparenciaactiva.gob.sv/fiscalia-iniciaria-un-nuevo-proceso-judicial-en-caso-masacre-el-mozote/>.

²¹ CIDH, "Caso Masacre de El Mozote," 86-7.

²² Ibid.; "Investigación previa en caso del El Mozote," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 14 October 1992.

²³ CIDH, "Caso Masacre de El Mozote," 102.

between the military and the guerrilla. They continued to bury the truth of the war that the bones were revealing. *La Prensa Gráfica* commentator J.E. López, for example, offered his view on the massacre on 30 November 1992 in "The myth of 'El Mozote.' " Recognizing that there was misinformation circulating in the public sphere, López sought to clarify a few points about what had happened at El Mozote. Drawing on a pamphlet published by a former member of the military who later joined the FMLN, Francisco Mena Sandoval, López affirmed that El Mozote was the site of one of the FMLN's training schools and was, as well, the site of frequent battles between the two forces. The fact that children as young as 8 years old were kidnapped and forced to join the FMLN, López wrote, explained the discovery of children's bones. And given that the community was actually a training school for "terrorists," the victims could not have been civilians massacred by the military. He concluded that El Mozote "was an FMLN cemetery,... that it was a 'military school' for youth and adults the FMLN kidnapped,...[and that it] was not a civilian community, but a 'refuge' for the FMLN."²⁴

A frequent champion of this version of the past was director of Medicina Legal, Juan Mateu Llor. At the end of 1992, for example, he declared that the possibility that the dead, whom he recognized included many children and youth, were killed in battles between the military and FMLN could not be discarded. El Mozote was, he added, a region where many residents participated in the war and, "In a war, many things can happen."²⁵ In early January 1993, he rejected the Argentines' conclusions that a massacre had taken place at El Mozote. All he hoped for (and despite his declarations) was "to arrive at the truth using scientific methods," "apolitically and without any pressure."²⁶

These discursive debates about the narrative truth of war were matched in debates about what the bones said, though the debates do not seem to have been given much or any space in the public sphere. In 1993, Cristiani invited a controversial Spanish doctor and anthropologist, José Manuel Reverte Coma, to El Salvador to participate in the exhumation. His interpretation of the bones excavated in the Convent—and especially their size—contradicted the EAAF's findings. As Guatemalan author Francisco Goldman wrote in 1999, and what he repeated in 2007 in *The Art of Political Murder: Who Killed the Bishop?*, Reverte Coma offered "ridiculous interpretations" of the evidence to obstruct the investigation. "All the tiny skeletons," as

²⁴ J.E. López, "El mito de 'El Mozote,' " *La Prensa Gráfica*, 30 November 1992.

²⁵ "Siguen investigaciones sobre hechos de El Mozote," *La Prensa Gráfica*, 21 December 1992.

²⁶ "Antropólogos E.U reanudan excavaciones en El Mozote," *El Diario de Hoy*, 8 January 1993.

Goldman reported, "were not from assassinated children...but from adolescent guerrillas, youth recruited from a small and malnourished race of men, who had died in battle." Goldman added that Reverte Coma had been removed from the investigation at the request of the head of the Truth Commission.²⁷

The EAAF were also highly critical of Reverte Coma and his conclusion that the bones did not belong to children but to malnourished and stressed out youth, and countered his views point by point. Aside from the more scientific issues with Reverte Coma's conclusions, the EAAF also rejected his idea that "the children killed at El Mozote were old enough to have been guerrilla members." Even if they had been "old enough," the EAAF wrote, it does not mean they were. The "real problem with Reverte Coma's argument" was that it supported the government's theory that the dead were guerrillas. While Reverte Coma "did not explicitly advocate the government's theories, ...his hypothesis could have been used to support them." This, presumably, would not have been a problem except that his argument "was not based on any substantial evidence." Indeed, "All evidence available" pointed to the fact that the government's theory were "baseless."²⁸

In the end, of course, forensics and the Truth Commission report confirmed that the military had massacred the victims. And, of course, the Amnesty Law was passed soon after. As Benjamín Cuéllar, the director of the Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas" (IDHUCA, Human Rights Institute of the Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas"), said, the Legislative Assembly "buried the Truth Commission report under the gravestone of amnesty."²⁹ Thus, amnesty almost completely buried the events of the past, evidence of the past, and the truth of the past. These things were only

²⁷ Francisco Goldman, *The Art of Political Murder: Who Killed the Bishop?* (New York: Grove Press, 2007), 380; Francisco Goldman, "El asesinato alcanza al obispo," *Letras Libres*, September 1999, <http://www.letraslibres.com/revista/convivio/el-asesinato-alcanza-al-obispo>. Goldman's interest in Reverte Coma was not related to El Salvador; the bishop he was talking about was not Romero. Rather, he was concerned with the 1998 assassination of monseñor Juan Gerardi days after he presented Remhi's findings about military responsibility to the public. Reverte Coma played a similar role in the investigation in Guatemala as in El Salvador, affirming that wounds on Gerardi's body were dog bites. In this view, an arthritic German Shepherd had killed Gerardi; military officers had most certainly not been involved. Goldman masterfully documents the government and military's efforts to obstruct the investigation into Gerardi's assassination.

²⁸ In reference to the size of the bones discovered, the EAAF pointed out that they were not "planning to use bone development as the sole indicator of age." Instead, they would look at teeth, "which is a much more stable variable, and much less dependent on environmental factors." (EAAF, "EAAF's experience with Dr. Reverte Coma during the El Mozote case," <http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/9019s3547>.)

²⁹ Benjamín Cuéllar Martínez, "El Salvador," in *Victims Unsilenced: The Inter-American Human Rights System and Transitional Justice in Latin America*, Due Process of Law Foundation (Washington: Due Process of Law Foundation, 2007), 65.

"almost completely" buried because the human rights community and relatives of the war dead have kept the past alive and have refused to allow the bones, and their loved ones, to be forgotten.

Exhumations and the state in Guatemala

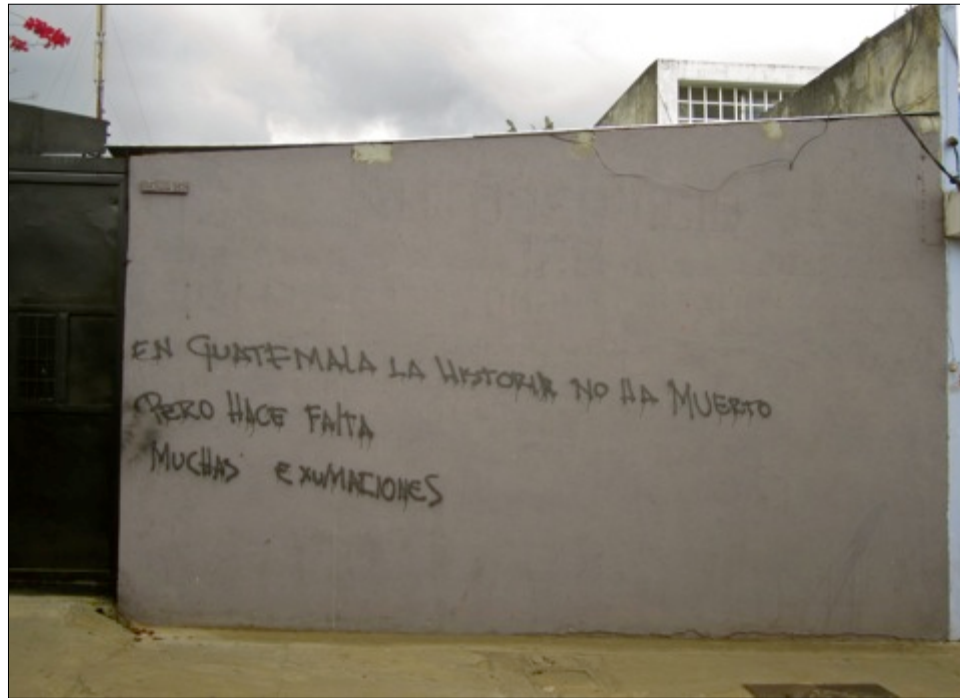
Just as had the Salvadoran military and its proxies, the Guatemalan military sowed the bodies of tens of thousands throughout the country during the conflict, hoping to reap a bountiful harvest of security and nationalism in their attempt to defeat the leftist guerrilla. Many of the bodies were tossed into mass graves, wells, or ossuary pits, or left on the side of the road as a warning to others: if the living were involved in whatever it was the dead had been involved in, they too would be tortured, raped, and assassinated, their bodies dumped for scavengers to feast on. The sites where the bodies were buried are Guatemala's clandestine cemeteries. They are clandestine not because they are particularly well-hidden or because relatives do not know where they are. Instead, they are clandestine because the dead were buried without the proper paperwork;³⁰ they were buried illegally, either by the military or by family members who did so secretly, despite the army's threats, as a witness from Nebaj in the Ixil triangle told the CEH. The witness declared, "So we went to bury [the dead], but secretly, and with fear because they say that the Army will return again,[the Army says] if someone comes to collect these Goddamned people then we will end their lives right there, this is what they said."³¹ Fear, thus, forbade the open burial of the dead, as it did the open performance of funerary rites. The existence and location of many clandestine cemeteries was and is an open secret. As anthropologist Victoria Sanford wrote, clandestine cemeteries "are truly clandestine only in the official negation of their existence and the silence imposed on communities."³² Relatives of the dead and disappeared were pushed to demand that exhumations be carried out. They demanded exhumations hoping to grant both the dead and the living some peace. They demanded exhumations so that they could know what happened to loved ones and could properly bury them.

³⁰ Juan Ramón Donado Vivar, "Aporte de la Antropología Social a la Investigación Forense para Casos de Desastres Naturales (Cantón Cúa, Municipio de Tacaná, Departamento de San Marcos, 2005-2006)" (thesis, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, 2008), 20-21.

³¹ CEH, *Consecuencias y Efectos de la Violencia*, 23.

³² Victoria Sanford, *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 17.

Exhumations in Guatemala predate the end of the armed conflict. Organizations working with relatives of the victims of genocide sought out Dr. Clyde Snow. He, along with members of the EAAF and Chile's Grupo de Antropología Forense (Forensic Anthropology Group), conducted the initial exhumations in El Quiché in 1991 and trained a team of Guatemalans so that they would be able to meet continued demands for exhumations. The Equipo de



"In Guatemala, history is not dead, but many exhumations are needed."
2a Calle. Zona 2. Ciudad de Guatemala. Photo by author. 13 December 2013.

Antropología Forense de Guatemala (Forensic Anthropology Team of Guatemala) was formed in 1992 and later became FAFG.³³ FAFG conducts the majority of the exhumations undertaken in Guatemala: 1,400 exhumations between 1992 and 2012, most in rural areas.³⁴ Many more, according to the author of the declaration in the photo above, are necessary.

³³ Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala, "Proyectos," accessed 2 October 2013, <http://www.fafg.org/paginas/proyectos.htm>. In 2013, while a handful of FAFG's over 100 team members had relatives who had been assassinated or disappeared during the conflict, most of those who work for FAFG do not have such personal ties to the violence. (José Suasnavar, in discussion with the author, October 2013.)

³⁴ Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, "Entrevista con José Suasnavar (FAFG), por FLACSO-Guatemala," *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales*, accessed 3 October 2013, <http://www.flacso.edu.gt/portal/?p=7876>. FAFG also conducts exhumations not related to the armed conflict. (Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala, "Casos," accessed 2 October 2014, <http://www.fafg.org/bd/>.) The ODHA, Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos (CALDH, Center for Legal Action in Human Rights), and the Centro de Análisis Forense y Ciencias Aplicadas (CACFA, Center for Forensic Analysis and Applied Sciences), have also carried out exhumations. Only CAFCA remains active.

For many years, according to a 2012 interview with José Suasnavar, one of FAFG's founders, exhumations were carried out only in rural areas in response to relatives' demands. It was in these same rural areas where the CEH had concluded that acts of genocide had been committed at certain times against certain indigenous populations. In urban centers, though there were denunciations of human rights violations, and especially of forced disappearances, there were no known clandestine cemeteries to excavate. Where the bodies of the disappeared had been hidden remained a mystery. The obvious difficulty of not having a cemetery to open led FAFG to Guatemala City's La Verbena Cemetery, where unidentified bodies have long been and continue to be buried without a name as XX. Examining the cemetery's records, investigators noticed, first, that between 1980 and 1984, among the worst years of the violence, the number of unidentified individuals rose significantly. They also noted that the cause of death was consistently recorded as having been violent. Investigators concluded that these might be the remains of the forcibly disappeared.³⁵

FAFG's exhumation of La Verbena's several ossuary pits is the largest the Foundation has undertaken. Based on their investigation of cemetery records, the FAFG team had originally expected to locate and identify the remains of approximately 890 individuals. By April 2012, just over two years after the exhumation had begun, close to 9,500 bodies had been uncovered.³⁶ It is, however, certain that most of these 9,500 bodies are not among the estimated 45,000 Guatemalans disappeared during the conflict. For decades, the remains of all unidentified bodies, mostly indigents, were tossed into the ossuaries. As well, the remains of those whose families had stopped paying "rent" on their tombs were thrown into the pits. Nevertheless, at least some of the remains excavated from La Verbena belong to the disappeared, and not only those disappeared from Guatemala City.³⁷ FAFG continues to work to recover, analyze and measure, and identify the bones. The ultimate goal is to return them to relatives so that they may bury loved ones according to their customs.

(Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial and Grupo de Acción Comunitaria, *Exhumaciones, Verdad, Justicia y Reparación en Guatemala: Estudio de Opinión a Nivel Nacional Guatemala* (2008), 5-6.

³⁵ Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, "Entrevista con José Suasnavar (FAFG), por FLACSO-Guatemala."

³⁶ Sandra Váldez, "Buscan osamentas de víctimas de la guerra en cementerio La Verbena," *Prensa Libre*, 13 April 2012, http://www.prensalibre.com/noticias/justicia/Buscan-cementerio-Verbena-relacionadas-conflicto_0_680932202.html.

³⁷ José Suasnavar, in discussion with the author, October 2013.

Exhumations in Guatemala are non-governmental projects, and FAFG is a non-governmental organization which has received funding from the United Nations Development Program, the International Organization for Migration, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United States State Department, and the European Union, among others.³⁸ That the state hesitates to exhume the dead is understandable given the CEH's allotting of responsibility for violations. The CEH concluded that the state was overwhelmingly responsible for human rights violations committed during the conflict, violations which the military and its proxies carried out. The military and the state are, of course, not equivalent, and certainly the military of the 1980s and the state of the post-Peace era are not.³⁹ As well, as anthropologist Steve Striffler and others have pointed out, the state is fragmented and state institutions often work at cross purposes.⁴⁰ This was less true during the conflict since the military was able to dominate various state institutions and reorient them toward the interests of "national security." After the formal return to democracy in 1986, and even more so after the Peace Accords were signed, there continued to be some common purpose in a range of state institutions. Political scientist Manolo Vela Castañeda, for example, has argued that civilian presidents and military officers created alliances whereby civilians would be allowed to govern if they, through their control over the Attorney General, made sure trials did not progress.⁴¹ Unlike in other cases where much time has passed or where the regime changed completely, the post-Peace political power of those implicated in crimes means that many are interested in leaving the dead buried.

While some state institutions and their members oppose exhumations, the MP continues to authorize them; indeed, exhumations cannot be undertaken without the MP's approval. Yet despite official permission, those associated with exhumations have consistently received threats warning them to stop excavating the past. Victoria Sanford wrote about death threats made against FAFG members in 1994 at Plan de Sánchez, Baja Verapaz.⁴² In February 2002, a mysterious fire broke out in the parish house in Nebaj, Quiché, where forensic anthropologists stored their equipment.⁴³ In August 2003, Fredy Peccerelli reported that FAFG had officially

³⁸ Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala, "Proyectos."

³⁹ Manolo Vela Castañeda, "El megapartido y sus perritos falderos," *El Periódico*, 6 July 2014, <http://elperiodico.com.gt/es/20140706/domingo/250343>.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Steve Striffler, *In the Shadows of State and Capital: The United Fruit Company, Popular Struggle, and Agrarian Restructuring in Ecuador, 1900-1995* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 208.

⁴¹ Manolo Vela Castañeda, "Memorias de una Batalla: Guatemala," unpublished manuscript, 19-20.

⁴² Sanford, *Buried Secrets*, 45.

⁴³ Elder Iteriano, "Nebaj con temor por quema de parroquia," *Prensa Libre*, 11 March 2002.

denounced 15 separate incidents of threats, harassment, or aggression against FAFG personnel to the MP so far that year. In one incident, the FAFG team was able to trace the license plate of a vehicle that had been following them to the Estado Mayor Presidencial (EMP, Presidential General Staff).⁴⁴ The connection between the state and threats to FAFG is evident in the 2003 incident. As well, after threats are made, the police and justice system do very little to stop them or to prosecute those who had made them, signaling at least tacit support for them. Clearly, in Guatemala's slow transition away from internal armed conflict, different state institutions have competing agendas.

It is not unexpected that various state institutions, especially the security forces, oppose exhumations. Exhumations provide additional evidence that the military massacred and disappeared tens of thousands of its own citizens.⁴⁵ Yet there are aspects of exhumations the state, in all its complexity and contradictions, can appreciate. Exhumations and the reburial of bones in official, non-clandestine, state and church-sanctioned cemeteries help to contain the dead in both space and time. With reburial, the bones are no longer scattered around Guatemala, lying just beneath the surface, in danger of being exposed after a heavy rain at just the wrong time: in the midst of a political campaign in which the candidate has blood on his hands, for example. Instead, reburial confines the bones—first in small, identical wooden boxes and then in the graves themselves—to one specific, ordered, well-defined place, and one which is often surrounded by thick concrete walls which prevent memories, and ghosts, from "escaping." Reburial also facilitates the process of containing the memories of the dead in time, to the Day of the Dead, when surviving relatives clean the graves, remember the dead, and leave gifts for them. Exhumations facilitate containing the memory of the dead, and the memory that, in the vast majority of the cases, state security forces were responsible for their deaths, to one place and to one time. With exhumation and reburial, no longer is the landscape scarred by places where the dead scream out (and clandestine cemeteries are certainly memory knots) to the living to be remembered, to be unearthed, to be laid to rest. Exhumations and reburial sanitize the landscape, helping to confine painful memories of death to legal cemeteries.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Sonia Pérez D., " 'Continuaremos, pese a amenazas,' " *Prensa Libre*, 26 August 2003.

⁴⁵ José Suasnavar pointed out that FAFG had recovered about 183 remains where the guerrilla were responsible (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, "Entrevista con José Suasnavar (FAFG), por FLACSO-Guatemala.") but given the CEH's conclusions about responsibility for human rights abuses, the majority are the victims of state terrorism.

⁴⁶ In this regard, the relatives' and the state's interests converge, for sanitizing the landscape and containing the

Exhumations also allow the state to continue its counterinsurgency agenda of surveilling and controlling the rural, indigenous population, as Jennifer Schirmer describes in *The Guatemalan Military Project*. Schirmer argues that after massacring tens of thousands of indigenous Guatemalans, the military set out to forcefully "reorder" life in the rural highlands.⁴⁷ A key aspect of the reorganization of rural life was the resettlement of those who had survived the scorched earth campaigns into model villages. With the streets organized in a grid, Schirmer describes model villages as "high-security areas built to serve as forms of population control...as well as to 'integrate' the local indigenous population into both the antisubversive fight and the 'nationalist' security and development project."⁴⁸ Residents, much like forensic anthropologists and relatives, were constantly watched. They were surveilled by soldiers and neighbors, leading villages to "internaliz[e] discipline and obedience;" this was "Bentham's panopticon internalized."⁴⁹ The integration of civilians into the counterinsurgency was accomplished through the creation, in 1981,⁵⁰ of the Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PACs, Civil Self-defense Patrols). Rural Guatemalans were forced to patrol, often unarmed, in rotating shifts of 24 hours. Schirmer reported that by 1984, out of a total population of seven to eight million, 1.4 million men, to say nothing of boys, the elderly, and some women, had been incorporated in the PACs.⁵¹ The Catholic Church's Remhi Project concluded that the patrols were created to control people and territory and allowed the military to have a "permanent presence in the [rural] communities and prevent whatever movement which was not under their control."⁵²

memories of death to cemeteries and to the Day of the Dead are also beneficial to the relatives. They allow the dead, whose spirits had been wandering without peace for decades, to return to their proper place and time.

⁴⁷ Jennifer Schirmer, *The Guatemalan Military Project: A Violence Called Democracy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 64-5. The discussion of Schirmer and life in the model villages draws on research conducted for my Master's thesis, *Truth and Forgetting in Guatemala: An Examination of Memoria del Silencio and Nunca Más* (University of Saskatchewan, 2005).

⁴⁸ Schirmer, *The Guatemalan Military Project*, 69.

⁴⁹ Carlos Y. Flores, "Bajo la Cruz: Memoria y Dimensión del Gran Sufrimiento entre los Q'eqchi' de Alta Verapaz," (Cobán, Guatemala: Centro Ak'Kutan, 2001); Linda Green, *Fear as a Way of Life: Mayan War Widows in Rural Guatemala* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 60.

⁵⁰ CEH, *Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio*, Volume 1, *Causas y Orígenes del Enfrentamiento Armado Interno*, (Guatemala City: Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, 1999), 200.

⁵¹ Schirmer, *The Guatemalan Military Project*, 91. Based on witness testimony, Remhi found the PACs responsible for almost 13% of the human right violations; ODHA, *Guatemala: Nunca Más*, Volume 2, *Los Mecanismos del Horror*, (Guatemala City: Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala, 1998), 122. The PACs were reorganized into Voluntary Civil Defense Committees in 1986, and were officially dissolved in the Peace Accords; CEH, *Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio*, Volume 2, *Las Violaciones de los Derechos Humanos y los Hechos de Violencia* (Guatemala City: Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, 1999), 231.

⁵² ODHA, *Los Mecanismos del Horror*, 118.

With the settlement of the population into model villages and the formation of PACs, which were not limited to model villages, rural areas were militarized as never before. Inhabitants were heavily controlled by the military and also were dependent on it for basic needs. Additional aspects of involving the indigenous population in "national security" were "reeducation" and the appropriation of indigenous cultural symbols and their incorporation into the counterinsurgency. These, the military hoped, would include the indigenous population into "the nation" and increase feelings of patriotism, national identity, and loyalty to the state.⁵³ The military, Schirmer argued, hoped to create a "Sanctioned Maya," an apolitical Maya "loyal to national symbols, the state, and by extension, the army."⁵⁴

There was nothing subtle about the military's governing of rural areas. Internment in model villages, incorporation into PACs, and the creation of a new sanctioned, sanitized Maya culture were forced on indigenous Guatemalans at the point of a machete based on the idea that, in this way, they would no longer be just beyond the military's or state's grasp, and so would no longer pose a threat. Exhumations continue this process of bringing the state into the lives of both indigenous and non-indigenous Guatemalans, and the complementary process of involving Guatemalans in the functioning of the state. The state and Guatemalans' mutual involvement is deep. The state, through one of its instruments, the MP, determines which bones, which histories will be excavated and which will not be.⁵⁵ Justice officials also have to agree to let the bones be reburied. Sanford described one incident where a judge first insisted that if the remains were reburied, relatives would forfeit the possibility of a criminal trial against the perpetrators.⁵⁶ Only "writing, signing, and sealing many legal documents" convinced the judge to allow the remains to be buried without the relatives losing their right to begin judicial proceedings. After all, as Sanford points out, "exhumations are carried out as an investigatory procedure of the court." Trials, "along with the proper religious burials of massacre victims [are] the central goal[s] of legal and forensic investigations into massacres."⁵⁷ As a result, and further involving state

⁵³ Schirmer, *The Guatemalan Military Project*, 114-115.

⁵⁴ Jennifer Schirmer, "Appropriating the Indigenous, Creating Complicity: the Guatemalan Military Project and the Sanctioned Maya," in *The Politics of Ethnicity: Indigenous Peoples in Latin American States*, ed. David Maybury-Lewis (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 64-66.

⁵⁵ Sanford, *Buried Secrets*, 37-38; Fernando López, *Módulo de Capacitación Dirigido a Fiscales del Ministerio Público: Naturaleza y Persecución Penal de los Crímenes Internacional Perpetrados durante el Conflict Armado Interno* (Guatemala City: Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala, 2008), section I, 4.

⁵⁶ Sanford, *Buried Secrets*, 67.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

representatives into the process of exhuming the dead, security personnel are charged with guarding exhumation sites, at least in part to "conserve legal custody of all evidence exhumed."⁵⁸ The state, through central and local representatives of the justice system, thus has significant control over exhumations. The state and its representatives control the "lives" of the dead, deciding if they will be exhumed and whether, where, and when they will be reburied. Security personnel guard exhumation sites; they guard the evidence of responsibility for gross human rights violations and they guard those who exhume. Of course whether those who guard exhumations were protecting "legal custody of the evidence" or controlling and surveilling the living is sometimes unclear (and it is undoubtedly possible to do both at once.) As the FAFG team knows, state security forces do follow and threaten those whose work is seen as a threat.⁵⁹

Exhumations and the work of forensic anthropologists also allow the state to better read Guatemala, and especially rural Guatemala. They make it more legible. In *Seeing Like a State*, political scientist James Scott described ways that the (abstract, amorphous) state sought to make society legible, to make sense of a society it did not understand, in order to facilitate taxation and conscription and to ensure internal security. Scott discusses how, by insisting on the use of heritable surnames, uniform weights and measures, cadastral land tenure maps, and the census, the state attempted to make legible, and "manipulable," from outside and above, the local and illegible.⁶⁰ The simplified version of society which resulted from the state's naming, measuring, and land tenure practices, the "maps" which the state created to understand the local, "did not successfully represent the actual activity of the society they depicted, nor were they intended to. They represented only that slice of it that interested the official observer." All that did not interest "the official observer," as an agent of the state, was left off the map.⁶¹ The state, thus, suffered from "tunnel vision," which allowed it to "brin[g] into sharp focus certain limited aspects of an otherwise far more complex and unwieldy reality." The state's narrowed vision "makes the phenomenon at the center of the field of vision more legible and hence more

⁵⁸ Sanford, *Buried Secrets*, 40.

⁵⁹ Significantly, the EMP, which was observed following FAFG members, was also responsible for the 1990 assassination of anthropologist Myrna Mack and the 1998 assassination of monseñor Gerardi.

⁶⁰ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 4-5. Legibility, however, is simply the first step, albeit the first essential element, in states' ultimately unsuccessful attempts at social engineering. Efforts to engineer society include urban planning in Brasilia and villagization in Julius Nyerere's Tanzania, both inspired by a "high-modernist ideology" which sees science and technology as tools which can "improve the human condition." (Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 88-9.)

⁶¹ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 3.

susceptible to careful measurement and calculation."⁶² Yet more than merely simplifying and measuring society, the "maps," "when allied with state power, would enable much of the reality they depicted to be remade."⁶³

At a basic level, exhumations contribute to legibility by officially determining how many are buried in a particular grave and who they are. Counting is undeniably a significant aspect of exhumations, for exhumations convert piles of bones into the remains of a specific number of Guatemalans. With the issuing of a death certificate once the remains have been identified, an individual can be placed into the correct category—"deceased." The state, as Scott suggested, loves to sort, to name, to categorize, to count, and exhumations allow it to do these things. Ian Hacking concurred. He pointed to the United States' census as evidence of the "enthusiasm for numerical data." The first census, he explained, had only four questions. The tenth decennial census had 13,010.⁶⁴ Exhumations clearly enable the state's addiction to counting and sorting.

As for identifying and naming the dead, which are an additional focus of the work of forensic anthropologists, art historian Erika Doss asserted that naming on memorials is "annalistic, a mechanical practice of notation whereby individuals are counted and collected into groups."⁶⁵ Doss's claim that naming allows for counting and categorization is especially interesting in the case of Guatemala. Whereas naming facilitates counting and categorizing in Doss's memorials, and thus increases legibility, from the Guatemalan state's perspective, naming might actually increase illegibility. Naming certainly allows the state to know who is alive, dead, widowed, a landowner, etc., but ultimately, as Hacking suggested, the state is interested in numbers. What is the population of Guatemala? How many Guatemalans are indigenous? A question of greater interest to many civil society and international organizations is: how many were killed and disappeared in the conflict? What makes sense to the state is the answer to this last question: 200,000. Knowing their names clarifies legal issues, especially locally, and allows relatives to properly bury their dead, but it does little for the state's ability to read its citizens. Were the state involved in memorial projects related to the conflict, as in Doss' work on the United States, the "methodical collection and inscription of these names" on memorials would facilitate their "reduc[ti]on to a deceitful narrative of national consensus." Were this the case, the

⁶² Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 11

⁶³ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 3.

⁶⁴ Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 2.

⁶⁵ Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 152.

initial individualizing and subsequent unifying which are part of naming would "depoliticiz[e] (or evad[e]) issues of responsibility and simultaneously justif[y] national imperatives."⁶⁶ Were the Guatemalan state involved in memorial processes as are other states, then naming the 162 victims of the 1982 Dos Erres massacre would increase legibility by reducing the names to just one—Guatemalan. Yet the Guatemalan state is only occasionally involved in memorial processes, most often when either the Inter American Commission or Court on Human Rights rules that it must be.⁶⁷ Naming does little to increase the state's ability to read the bones.

While legibility is a useful lens through which to view exhumations, and while it allows some of their complexities to come to light, it is not sufficient. Foucault's discussion of the "art of government" contributes to a more full exploration of exhumations and the state's complicated relationship to them, and to the living. The art of government offers insight into the way that exhumations involve Guatemalans in the state's various institutions, and also involve the state and its institutions in Guatemalans' lives, often for the first time.⁶⁸ Foucault's idea of the art of government⁶⁹ emerged in the series of lectures he gave at the Collège de France in the late 1970s. In these lectures, Foucault described the art of government as "the way in which one conducts the conduct of men."⁷⁰ When he spoke of government, therefore, he was referring to how people's behavior is controlled "within the framework of, and using the instruments of, a state."⁷¹

The art of government characteristic of modern, liberal governments emerged in Western Europe in the mid-1700s as the population replaced territory as the main goal of government; at this time, "the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its

⁶⁶ Doss, *Memorial Mania*, 151-2.

⁶⁷ See, for example, "Application to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of The Las Dos Erres Massacre (Case 11.681) against The Republic Of Guatemala," July 30 2008, <http://www.cidh.oas.org/demandas/11.681%20Masacre%20de%20las%20Dos%20Erres%20Guatemala%2030%20julio%202008%20ENG.pdf>; "Case of Tiu Tojin v. Guatemala, Judgment of November 26, 2008 (Merits, Reparations, and Costs)," 26 November 2008, http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_190_ing1.pdf.

⁶⁸ Donado Vivar, "Aporte de la Antropología Social a la Investigación Forense para Casos de Desastres Naturales," 14.

⁶⁹ As Colin Gordon noted, Foucault used art of government almost synonymously with "rationality of government," which Gordon also states is the equivalent of governmentality. As Gordon explained it, "A rationality of government will thus mean a way or system of thinking about the nature or the practice of government (who can govern; what governing is; what or who is governed), capable of making some form of that activity thinkable and practicable both to its practitioners and to those upon whom it was practiced"; Colin Gordon, "Governmental rationality: an introduction," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1-3.

⁷⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79*, ed. Michel Sellenart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 186 and 1-2.

⁷¹ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 317.

wealth, longevity, health, etc." became the focus and object of government.⁷² When people became the object of government, the art of government developed, revolving around the incorporation of "economy" into government. Foucault understood economy to be the way in which the head of a family manages both family members and the family's goods in order to increase the family's wealth. Thus, governing a state required expanding the head of a household's management, via surveilling and controlling, of his household to the level of society, to the "wealth and behavior of each and all."⁷³ It was precisely the government's new focus on people, on their "wealth and behavior," and the similar shift from seeing the family as model to understanding that the family could be used to control and surveil, which allowed this new art of government to emerge. With this shift, the family became "the privileged instrument for the government of the population," allowing for the creation of campaigns oriented toward long-life and health. But again, these campaigns are not altruistic or un-interested; they are ways for the state to keep a watchful eye on its citizens, and to exercise some control over them, all without the population being aware of "what is being done to it."⁷⁴

This new art of government, as Foucault described it, was liberal, meaning that it was focused on governing less (a lesson Guatemala's counterinsurgency state never learned); one should, as Foucault wrote, "always suspect that one governs too much."⁷⁵ Yet while liberalism is based on the idea of governing the least, meaning that freedom of behavior is essential, this freedom must be "produced and organized." Freedom is forever being manufactured, a process which always seeks to find a balance between individual and collective interests, ensuring that neither intrudes on the other or endangers it; this process seeks to ensure that individuals' and broader society's interests are put in least danger by balancing security and freedoms. As a result, Foucault argued that at the same time as the liberal art of government emerged, so too did a range of mechanisms which produced freedom, which "introduc[ed] additional freedom through additional control and intervention." "That is to say," wrote Foucault, "control is no longer just the necessary counterweight to freedom, as in the case of panopticism: it becomes its mainspring."⁷⁶

⁷² Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 92-3.

⁷³ Foucault, "Governmentality," 99-100.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 317-9

⁷⁶ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 65-7. Foucault concluded by reminding listeners that "in the end this liberal

Little of this, and quite unlike in model villages, was centered on force, and in his exploration of the art of government, Foucault was shifting many of his thoughts about the everyday "disciplinary techniques" and "techniques of power" characteristic of prisons onto the non-prison population, onto society at large. Thus, rather than exceptional force being central to controlling and shaping behavior, un-exceptional self-control and incorporation were.⁷⁷ What Foucault describes as "disciplinary technologies of labor," which include surveilling, inspecting, and reporting and are directed toward the body, come to co-exist with non-disciplinary technologies of power which "infiltrate" and "embed" themselves in existing disciplinary techniques of power. These new non-disciplinary technologies "massify" and contribute to the emergence of biopolitics, which sees and deals with the population as a "political problem."⁷⁸ Thus, by the end of the 18th century, with the appearance of the liberal art of government and biopolitics, and the related emergence of non-disciplinary technologies of power, what becomes important to government is the birth rate, the death rate, life span, and other similar things, all of which it seeks to control. Of course to control, information is necessary, so demographers emerged to measure these things, and "forecasts [and] statistical estimates" appeared. It is, Foucault explained, "a matter of taking control of life and the biological processes of man-as-species and of ensuring that they are not disciplined, but regularized."⁷⁹

The way that the art of government extends the Guatemalan state into citizens' lives and seeks to control their behavior is evident in exhumations where behavior is controlled "within the framework of, and using the instruments of, a state." Exhumations allow the state to control the behavior of its citizens not through force, not through discipline, but through non-disciplinary technologies of power. That is, rather than controlling individuals and their behavior with force (though Guatemala, and especially rural Guatemala, continues to be highly militarized and brute force is still used to control people's actions and where they cannot live), state institutions can, through the process of exhuming the dead, control the population and its conduct through paperwork. It is paperwork—the filing of a petition to exhume a clandestine cemetery, the issuing of death certificates and deeds to land, the registering of a birth—which allows more

art of government introduces by itself or is the victim from within [of] what could be called crises of governmentality," (Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 68) and which in some ways gives rise to a new art of neo-liberal government.

⁷⁷ Gordon, "Governmental Rationality: An Introduction," 3-4.

⁷⁸ Michel Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (New York: Picador, 2003), 241-3 and 245.

⁷⁹ Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended,"* 243 and 246-7.

accurate measures to be taken and statistics to be known. This information allows the state to control behavior and to regularize life, and death. The Guatemalan state is thus able to embrace its object—the population—as it makes demands on the state, an embrace which seeks to control and contain more than to comfort and care for Guatemalans.

Though the focus of this section is on how the state benefits from exhumations, on how citizens become involved in the state's operations through exhumations, this is certainly not what relatives are thinking about when they demand that an exhumation be carried out. As FAFG explained in a 1998 post-exhumation report, those buried in clandestine cemeteries were buried illegally. Legal burials require, at the very least, an autopsy in cases where the deceased did not die a natural death, and the issuing of a death certificate. Since bones excavated from clandestine cemeteries were never autopsied, nor were death certificates issued, legally the dead are alive.⁸⁰ For relatives, this legal limbo, the sort of zombification of family members where the dead are living, is painful on a spiritual level, but it is also the root of serious and frustrating legal battles.⁸¹ Without a death certificate, widowers and widows cannot remarry, for their spouses are still alive. Without a death certificate, children cannot inherit land, nor can it be sold, for the owner stubbornly refuses to sell from beyond the grave. Thus, in addition to giving the dead and their relatives some peace, and in addition to extending the reach of the state, exhumations make sense of the legal complications that go with having a relative buried in a clandestine cemetery.

There is no reason why the Salvadoran state could not also benefit from exhumations, even though exhumations would very likely reveal more undeniably that ARENA and the military's heroes are responsible for human rights violations. Even so, the Salvadoran state would be able to count and more fully incorporate Salvadorans into its operations if the dead were exhumed and buried. The Salvadoran state was unable to govern all Salvadorans' behavior during the war, at least in part because many Salvadorans were beyond the state's reach and living in FMLN-controlled areas. There will always be an interest, for whichever party is in power, in making sure this does not happen again, that no Salvadorans fall between the cracks and are not properly governed. The state is surely interested in incorporating living, breathing Salvadorans (and their dead relatives) into its operations in the aftermath of so many years when

⁸⁰ Quoted in Donado Vivar, "Aporte de la Antropología Social," 20-1.

⁸¹ FAFG, "FAFG," accessed 3 October 2013, www.fafg.org/paginas/fafg.htm.

these people were beyond its control, to use its instruments and institutions (Medicina Legal, the judicial system, etc.) to embrace these Salvadorans, to count them and to categorize them.

But exhumations are fundamentally about victims and relatives, who have spent decades demanding truth. The painstaking process of unearthing, identifying, and then reburying the bones, and the psychosocial work which accompanies exhumations, help the victims' relatives find some sense of peace, a peace based on knowing what happened to the dead, knowing where they are buried, and being able to honor them. Guatemalan poet Francisco Morales Santos wrote that when Spring returns to Guatemala, it will be fertilized by human bones, "which were scattered / by the dance of death." And when Spring returns, "[o]nly then / will the whole bloody history, / besieged, / spoken, / and hidden, / be truly mapped out.// Only then the time will come / to put our hearts and ears to the ground / to listen to the voices / which we have been summoning / to fight the law of forgetfulness."⁸² Exhumations "map" the history of the conflict. They help combat forgetfulness lest, as Paul Ricoeur wrote, it kill the victims a second time.⁸³

⁸² Francisco Morales Santos, "The Time Will Come," in *Our Culture is Our Resistance: Repression, Refuge, and Healing in Guatemala*, photographs by Jonathan Moller (New York: Powerhouse Books, 2004), 128.

⁸³ Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*, trans. David Pellauer, ed. Mark I. Wallace (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 290.

Conclusion

The Power of Discourse

If you shut up truth and bury it under the ground, it will but grow, and gather to itself such explosive power that the day it bursts through it will blow up everything in its way.
—Emile Zola¹

Discourse is incredibly powerful. Being able to determine "the central terms around which and in terms of which contestation and struggle can occur" is even more so. This is why, as William Roseberry writes, it is something the state hopes to achieve.² Discourse's power is clear in Guatemala and El Salvador's post-Peace eras. In Guatemala, the human rights community fights to maintain this power, to keep a hold of the reins of discourse, forcing former military officers like president Otto Pérez Molina to repeat calls for memory when he might prefer that people forget where he served in the early 1980s and what happened there. This, after all, allows him to face trial for genocide. Yet Pérez Molina cannot openly call for forgetting. Guatemala's discursive framework prevents it. This, however, is what former military officers and conservatives more generally do in El Salvador. There, the far weaker Salvadoran human rights community has been unable to dictate how the past will be talked about and what place it will have in the present and future. Instead, the human rights community counters far more powerful conservative sectors' insistence on forgetting with equally persistent calls for truth. They demand that the Amnesty/Amnesia Law be revoked, a move that would promote memory, as well as justice.

But words are not just words. They represent ideas and ways of seeing the world, as well as solutions to possible problems. Discursive frameworks limit these as well, meaning "both" is not currently a valid answer to the pressing question of whether Guatemalans and Salvadorans should remember or forget. Indeed, discursive frameworks limit the range of questions that can be asked. The question cannot be Nietzschean: "When and what should Guatemalans and Salvadorans remember? When and what should they forget?"

¹ As quoted in Pierre Dreyfus, ed., *Dreyfus: His Life and Letters* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1938), 175.

² William Roseberry, "Hegemony and the Language of Contention," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, eds. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 360-1.

Discursive (and other types of) frameworks are limiting, though those limits certainly do slowly change over time. They narrow the way an issue can be talked about and work to disqualify possible solutions to problems when they do not fall within the limits of the particular framework that dominates. This can be seen when Edelberto Torres-Rivas tried, and failed, to broaden the debate about genocide to focus on expanding the definition of the term. They sort both solutions and ways of talking into "valid" and "invalid" based on a set of criteria internal to those frameworks and discourage "thinking outside the box" and innovative solutions to long-standing problems.

El Salvador's Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador (Truth Commission for El Salvador) and Guatemala's Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico (CEH, Historical Clarification Commission) were important in the process of setting the limits on how the past is talked about and, more so in Guatemala, supporting the limits that had already been set. But neither they nor the countries' discursive frameworks created what Michel Foucault labeled regimes of truth. They did not create "the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements."³ Different truths can still exist, and even thrive, within a common discursive framework, as well as one that pits truth against forgetting.

Yet perhaps the failure of the Salvadoran and Guatemalan commissions to establish a regime of truth is positive. Many point to the benefit of continued debate about the past. Elizabeth Jelin, for example, highlights the importance and usefulness of creating "legitimate spaces for expression and controversy about different memories," for creating "multiple spaces for debate." For Jelin, this is what democracy is all about; it involves the "recognition of plurality and conflict more than the hope for reconciliation, silences, or erasures by fiat." This must, however, "be anchored strongly in the rule of law."⁴ Ofelia Ferrán rephrased Paul Ricoeur's views on the issue of dissensus, writing in support of "fruitful and healthy practice of controversy.... where competing claims and views about the past can be presented in the name of a healthy dialogue."⁵

³ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper. (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1980.), 131-2.

⁴ Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 104-5.

⁵ Ofelia Ferrán, *Working through Memory: Writing and Remembrance in Contemporary Spanish Narrative* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 41-2.

The "practice of controversy" in Guatemala and El Salvador, however, is far from "fruitful and healthy," as seen in previous chapters. Human rights defenders, both those whose work relates directly to the wars but also peasant and anti-mining activists, are frequently threatened and killed, much as they were during the conflicts. As well, in El Salvador, both the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN, Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) and Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA, Nationalist Republican Alliance) continue to talk as if the war had never ended. As for Jelin's support of dissensus, she highlights the need for debates to be "anchored strongly in the rule of law." This is hardly the case in either country. In El Salvador, the unconstitutional Amnesty Law still prevents trials for crimes committed in the Civil War. In Guatemala, trials for crimes committed during the conflict, and reviews of those verdicts, are subject to political and other types of pressure; the judiciary is not independent. As well, in both countries, impunity rates for post-Peace crimes are extraordinarily high. Rather than law ruling, violence, corruption, impunity, gangs, and narcotrafficking often do, all of which have led the Fund for Peace to include both El Salvador and Guatemala on its Fragile (and not Failed) State Index. In 2014, El Salvador was in the "high warning" category while Guatemala was in the "very high warning" group, as they have been for many years.⁶ As healthy as dissensus might be in theory, it hardly seems to be the reality in either El Salvador or Guatemala.

El Salvador's Monumento a la Memoria y la Verdad (Monument for Memory and Truth) is meant to be a space for encounter and might point to one (limited⁷) way forward, a way to work toward reconciliation, peace, democracy, and non-repetition. A grassroots project, the Monumento includes the names of civilians killed by both the guerrilla and military, as well as the names of guerrillas and soldiers killed while on leave visiting family or otherwise not fulfilling military missions. In this, even though it does exclude non-civilian victims, it is more inclusive than other projects devoted to the victims (or heroes) of the war. These other projects are very much ARENA or FMLN projects. There is no denying that memory is political, as seen in the fact that the ARENA mayor of San Salvador decided to rename the Calle San Antonio Abad after Calle Mayor Roberto d'Aubuisson Arrieta since he, too, was an important figure in Salvadoran history. Reaction to the decision was swift, as in the photos below. To be sure,

⁶ Fund for Peace, "Fragile States Index 2014," Accessed 3 February 2014, <http://ffp.statesindex.org/>.

⁷ Limited because it does not address the root causes of the war, which will be discussed in the final pages of this conclusion.

FMLN politicians do the same thing. The mayor of Mejicanos, for example, a city just to the north though indistinguishable from San Salvador, worked to re-name the streets after FMLN heroes and combatants when he was elected, and to make sure the street signs were red, the color of the FMLN.⁸



"No street with his name. Deaths Squads."

"Do you need a name for a street? I offer you 30,000."

Source: Asociación Pro-Búsqueda's facebook page, published 8 December and 1 December 2014

Though the Monument for Memory and Truth repeats the human rights community's discourse and refuses to cede space to the idea of amnesty or forgetting, and though it still divides Salvadorans (into the overly simplistic categories of civilian victims and military/guerrilla perpetrators), it nevertheless works to erase previous divisions and to reconcile the different truths of the war that exist in the country. *La Prensa Gráfica* commentator Óscar Picardo Joao pointed this out shortly before the Monument was unveiled in 2003. He described the presence of "teachers, *campesinos*, members of the Armed Forces, insurgents," of Rodrigo Porth, the victims of the Zona Rosa massacre, and "guerrillas and unionists" (i.e., both the FMLN's and military's victims, though he does not say so) as an "emblematic, pedagogical mosaic which proposes a model of coexistence and which, at the same time, denounces antagonistic and ideological polarization."⁹ More than anything, his piece is a denunciation of

⁸ Member of FMLN's Secretaria Nacional de Memoria Histórica, conversation with author, 6 June 2012.

⁹ Óscar Picardo Joao, "Sobre 'monumentos', 'memorias' y 'verdades,'" *La Prensa Gráfica*, 17 December 2003. The monument, with its "interminable lists of names...reconstructs a hidden history, it demystifies, it returns

those who negotiated and signed the Peace Accords, but his comment about the Monument as an example of coexistence is significant. It points to the Monument's inclusiveness and its potential power to reconcile, to allow Salvadorans to *live with* each other. The division between civilian victim and armed perpetrator might be easier to work and live (peacefully) with than a division between FMLN or ARENA supporters, and including victims of both FMLN and military violations works to bridge the gap that separates El Salvador's different truths.

The Monumento suggests that some of those who experienced the Salvadoran Civil War in flesh and blood, and who survived it (and many did not), are re-imagining truth and memory as being more inclusive than the terms have been understood in the past. Though the right's continued promotion of forgetting and their apparent rejection of the Monumento itself (as being a project of the left) suggest that reconciling in El Salvador (as in Guatemala) is still a work in progress, the expanded ideas of truth and memory the Monumento promotes are and will be an important tool in working toward reconciling and ensuring non-repetition. Recognizing that different truths and memories of the past exist paves the way for *reconciling*, for reconciling distinct truths and memories, and the people who hold them.

protagonism to the anonymous, it judges the present, it screams the truth, it points out the lie, it unmasks, it de-ideologizes, it does justice at the margins of the tribunals, it revives scenes of tears and pain, it makes hidden reminiscence public in certain hearts,...it is presented as testimonial architecture of good and evil...and it even vindicates the aesthetic of public monuments..." There is nothing the monument does not do, it seems.

NOTE ON SOURCES

As mentioned in the introduction, this dissertation relies to a large extent on the discourse and debates about the past present in (oligopolistic) newspapers since El Salvador and Guatemala signed the final Peace Accords on 16 January 1992 and 29 December 1996, respectively. In El Salvador, articles and opinion pieces in *El Diario de Hoy* and *La Prensa Gráfica* form the bulk of research conducted in the country's *hemeroteca*, or newspaper archive. They control 87% of the market and are closely tied with the political right. The leftist *Diario Co-Latino*, which controls less than 10% of the market, was also consulted to provide an entry into the non-conservative media. All are little more than party mouthpieces (though for different parties), especially around election time. In Guatemala's *hemeroteca*, I read through *Prensa Libre*, *Siglo Veintiuno*, and *El Periódico*. *Prensa Libre*, originally founded to oppose the progressive Jacobo Arbenz government in 1950, is the most read and influential of the three. *Prensa Libre*'s parent corporation controls as much as 82% of the market. *Siglo Veintiuno* voices the opinions the business and conservative religious sectors. Its parent corporation controls approximately 9% of the market while *El Periódico*'s parent controls roughly 5% of the market.

The human rights community and government institutions' publications, news releases, and ads taken out in newspapers are another major source of information for this dissertation, as are these organizations and institutions' webpages or social media pages. Books authored by those who participated in the conflicts or peace negotiations in some way, whether the books are about their own experiences or not, form a final part of the written sources used to identify public discourse and its frameworks. I also observed protests, demonstrations, trials, and commemorations; visited monuments and an exhumation; and photographed street art to get a more popular understanding of how memory and forgetting are understood.

Editorials, published interviews, journalists' interpretations and commentary about events, and the work and words of NGOs, activists, and artists are the backbone of this dissertation. The words they use are analyzed and interrogated to discover the frameworks that limit what they say, and to place their words into larger struggles about discourse. Just as discursive frameworks determine what individuals can say, their words also push these frameworks to the limits, potentially leading to their expansion or contraction.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PERIODICALS

ContraPunto (El Salvador). San Salvador. 2011-2014.

Dialogo. Guatemala City: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales. 2006-2011.

Diario (Co-)Latino (El Salvador). San Salvador. From 16 January 1992.

El Diario de Hoy. San Salvador. From 16 January 1992.

Enfoques. San Salvador. From 2006.

Estudios Centroamericanos. San Salvador: Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas." From January 1992.

El Faro (El Salvador). San Salvador. elfaro.net. 2005-2014.

La Hora (Guatemala). Guatemala City. From 29 December 1996.

El Periodico (Guatemala). Guatemala City. From 29 December 1996.

Plaza Pública (Guatemala). Guatemala City. plazapublica.com.gt. From 2011.

La Prensa Gráfica (El Salvador). San Salvador. From 16 January 1992.

Prensa Libre (Guatemala). Guatemala City. From 29 December 1996.

Realidad. San Salvador: Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas." From 1992.

Siglo XXI (Guatemala). Guatemala City. From 29 December 1996.

Vértice. (San Salvador). From 1999.

SIGNIFICANT PRIMARY SOURCES

"Acuerdo de México." 27 April 1991.

"Acuerdo de Paz de El Salvador." 16 January 1992.

Alamanni de Carrillo, Beatrice. "Caso Jesuitas. Informe de la Señora Procuradora para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, sobre la Impunidad Respecto de las Ejecuciones Arbitrarias de Ignacio Ellacuría, S. J.; Ignacio Martín Baró, S.J.; Joaquín López y López, S.J.; Amando López, S.J.; Segundo Montes, S.J.; Juan Ramón Moreno, S.J.; Elba Julia Ramos y Celina Mariceth Ramos." San Salvador: Procuradora para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, 30 October 2002.

- Alamanni de Carrillo, Beatrice. "Caso Ernestina y Erlinda Serrano Cruz. Informe de la Señora Procuradora para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos sobre las Desapariciones Forzadas de las Niñas Ernestina y Erlinda Serrano Cruz, Su Impunidad actual y el Patrón de la Violencia en que Ocurrieron Tales Desapariciones." San Salvador: Procuradora para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, 2 September de 2004.
- Alamanni de Carrillo, Beatrice. "Informe sobre la Impunidad en el Asesinato de Monseñor Óscar Romero, en Ocasión del XXII Aniversario de Su Ejecución Arbitraria." San Salvador: Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, 20 March 2002.
- Alamanni de Carrillo, Beatrice. "Informe Especial de la Señora Procuradora para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos sobre la Práctica de Desapariciones Forzadas de Personas en el Contexto del Conflicto Armado Interno Ocurrido en El Salvador entre 1980 y 1992." San Salvador: Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, 7 March 2005
- Alamanni de Carrillo, Beatrice. "Informe Especial de la Señora Procuradora para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos sobre Masacres de Población Civil Ejecutadas por Agentes del Estado en el Contexto del Conflicto Armado Interno Ocurrido en El Salvador entre 1980 y 1992." San Salvador: Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, 7 March 2005.
- Alianza Republicana Nacionalista. "Coena." *Alianza Republicana Nacionalista*. Accessed 17 March 2014. <http://arena.org.sv/noticia-coena/>.
- Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional. *Del Silencio a la Memoria: Revelaciones del Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional*. Guatemala City: Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional, 2011.
- Asamblea Legislativa de la República de El Salvador. "Ley de Reconciliación Nacional. Decreto No. 147." 23 January 1992.
- Asamblea Legislativa de la República de El Salvador. "Ley de la Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos. Decreto No. 183." 20 February 1992.
- Asamblea Legislativa de la República de El Salvador. "Ley de Amnistía General para la Consolidación de la Paz. Decreto No. 486." 20 March 1993.
- Asociación Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos de Guatemala. "Otto Perez Molina Pretende Mutilar y Reducir los Principios Elementales de la Política Pública de Reparación a las Víctimas del Conflicto Armado Interno a través de la Imposición de Reformas al Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento." *FAMDEGUA Blog*. 5 July 2013. <http://famdeguagt.blogspot.com/2013/07/otto-perez-molina-pretende-mutilar-y.html>.
- Asociación para el Avance de las Ciencias Sociales de Guatemala and Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya. "Los Contenidos de los Cursos de Estudios Sociales en el Contexto de

la Reforms Educativa: aportes para el debate." Volumen 1: Ponencias. Guatemala City: AVANCSO and CNEM, 1999.

Asociación Pro-Búsqueda de Niñas y Niños Desaparecidos. Press Releases. 2013-2014

Balsells Tojo, Alfredo. *La Memoria del Silencio: Síntesis del Informe de la Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico. Jornadas sobre Olvido, Memoria y Comisiones de la Verdad*. June 2000. http://www.cetede.org/IMG/pdf/IV_MOP_2000ponencia_ABalsells.pdf.

Balsells Tojo, Alfredo. *Olvido o Memoria: El Dilema de la Sociedad Guatemalteca*. Guatemala City: F&G Editores, 2001.

Centro Civitas. "Guatemala, El Silencio de la Memoria: El Informe de la CEH en los Medios de Comunicación." In *La Persistencia de la Verdad: A Diez Años del Informe de la CEH*, edited by Impunity Watch y Convergencia por los Derechos Humanos, 23-44. Guatemala City: Editorial Serviprensa, 2009.

Centro de Documentación de la Memoria Histórica "Marianella García Villas" de la Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador. Pamphlet.

Centro Internacional para Investigaciones en Derechos Humanos. "Conociendo el Pasado Forjemos el Futuro." Pamphlet.

Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos. *Genocidio, la Máxima Expression del Racismo: Primer Encuentro en Guatemala sobre Racismo and Genocidio*. Guatemala City: Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos, 2004.

Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos. "La Verdad No Puede Tener Secretos." Guatemala City: Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos, 15 December 2010.

Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos and Coordinadora Nacional Indígena y Campesina. *Conflictividad de la Tierra: Evidencias de Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos en Guatemala*. Guatemala: Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos, 2009.

Centro para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos "Madeleine Lagadec." *Informe de Investigación Temática: La Experiencia del CPDH "MADELEINE LAGADEC" en el Acompañamiento a Familiares de Víctimas en la Exigencia de Sus Derechos*. San Salvador: Centro para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos "Madeleine Lagadec," 2006.

Centro para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos "Madeleine Lagadec." *Salud Mental: Un derecho de las Víctimas Incumplido por el Estado*. San Salvador: Centro para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos "Madeleine Lagadec," 2010.

- Centro para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos "Madeleine Lagadec." Press Releases. February-March 2014.
- Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador. *De la Locura a la Esperanza: Version Popular*. San Salvador: Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador, 2003.
- Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala. "Aclarando Nuestra Historia...Descubramos los Derechos Humanos." Guatemala City: Editorial Los Altos, 2001.
- Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador. *De la Locura a la Esperanza: La Guerra de los Doce Años en El Salvador: Reporte de la Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador*. New York: United Nations, 1993.
- Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador. *From Madness to Hope: The 12-year War in El Salvador: Report of the Commission on the Truth for El Salvador*. New York: United Nations, 1993.
- Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico. *Guatemala: Memoria del Silencio*. 12 vols. Guatemala City: Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, 1999.
- Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico. *Guatemala: Memory of Silence*. Volume 5, *Conclusions and Recommendations*. Guatemala City: Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, 1999.
- Comisión Presidencial Coordinadora de la Política del Ejecutivo en Materia de Derechos Humanos. *Boletines*. 2010-2012.
- Comisión Presidencial Coordinadora de la Política del Ejecutivo en Materia de Derechos Humanos. *Comunicados*. 2011-2012.
- Comisión Presidencial Coordinadora de la Política del Ejecutivo en Materia de Derechos Humanos. *Resumen Enero 2008-Noviembre 2011*. Guatemala City. 2012.
- Congreso de la República de Guatemala. "Decreto número 145-1996. Ley de Reconciliación Nacional." 27 December 1996.
- Congreso de la República de Guatemala. "Diputados y Diputadas: Séptima Legislatura, 2012-2016." *Congreso de la República de Guatemala*. <http://www.congreso.gob.gt/legislaturas.php>.
- Congreso de la República de Guatemala. "Punto Resolutivo 3-2014." 13 May 2014.
- Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. "Caso Masacres de El Mozote y Lugares Aledaños vs. El Salvador: Sentencia de 25 de octubre de 2012, (Fondo, Reparaciones y Costas)." 25 October 2012. http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_252_esp.pdf.

- Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. "Caso de las Hermanas Serrano Cruz vs. El Salvador: Sentencia de 1 de marzo de 2005." 1 March 2005.
<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/iachr/C/120-esp.html>.
- Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. "Caso de las Hermanas Serrano Cruz vs. El Salvador: Sentencia de 1 de marzo de 2005. (Interpretación de la Sentencia de Fondo, Reparaciones y Costas)." 1 March 2005.
http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_120_esp.pdf.
- Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. "Caso de la Masacre de Las Dos Erres vs. Guatemala. Sentence de 24 de noviembre de 2009. (Excepción Preliminar, Fondo, Reparaciones y Costas)." 24 November 2009.
http://www.tc.gob.pe/portal/servicios/sentenciascidh/seriec_249_esp.pdf.
- Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. "Caso Chitay Nech y Otros vs. Guatemala: Sentencia de 25 de Mayo 2010. (Excepciones Preliminares, Fondo, Reparaciones y Costas)." 15 May 2010.
http://www.tc.gob.pe/portal/servicios/sentenciascidh/seriec_212_esp.pdf.
- Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. "Caso Gudiel Álvarez y Otros ('Diario Militar') vs. Guatemala. Sentencia de 20 de noviembre de 2012 (Fondo, Reparaciones y Costas)." 20 November 2012. <http://derechos.te.gob.mx/PORTAL/?q=content/gudiel-%C3%A1lvarez-diario-militar-vs-guatemala-fondo-reparaciones-y-costas>.
- Corte Suprema de Justicia. "Comunicado de Prensa: Reuniones Preparatorias para Exhumaciones en El Mozote, Morazán." 27 January 2014.
http://www.csj.gob.sv/comunicaciones/2014/ENE_14/270114_IML.pdf.
- Corte Suprema de Justicia. "Caso de la Masacre en la Comunidad San Francisco Angulo, 665-2010." 5 February 2014.
http://perso.unifr.ch/derechopenal/assets/files/jurisprudencia/j_20140408_01.pdf.
- "Discurso del Presidente Alfonso Portillo en el Acto de Desmovilización del Estado Mayor Presidencial." *Grupo Nizkor*. 30 October 2003.
<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/guatemala/doc/portillo.html>.
- "El Salvador: Mexico Peace Agreements—Provisions Creating the Commission on Truth." 27 April 1991.
<http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/commissions/El%20Salvador-Charter.pdf>.
- Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense. *2002 Annual Report: El Salvador*.
<http://eaaf.typepad.com/pdf/2002/07ElSalvador.pdf>.

- Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial (ECAP) and Grupo de Acción Comunitaria (GAC). *Exhumaciones, Verdad, Justicia y Reparación en Guatemala: Estudio de Opinión a Nivel Nacional Guatemala*. 2008.
- Equipo Maíz. *El Salvador, 10 Años Después.... : Una Historia Revelada, 1992-2002 / El Salvador, 10 Years Later...: History Revealing Itself, 1992-2002*. San Salvador: Algier's Impresores, 2001.
- Equipo Maíz. *Los Acuerdos de Paz en El Salvador*. 2nd edition. San Salvador: Algiers Impresores, 2010.
- Equipo Maíz. *Historia de El Salvador: De Como la Gente Guanaca No Sucumbió ante los Infames Ultrajes de Españoles, Criollos, Gringos y Otras Plagas*. 9th edition. San Salvador: Equipo Maíz, 2012.
- Equipo Maíz. *La Página Maíz*. 2007-2011.
- Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional. *Veteranos en Marcha: Historia de la Lucha Revolucionaria en El Salvador*. San Salvador: Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional, 2005.
- Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional. *Compartimos Sueños y Tortillas: Memorias del Internacionalismo Militante en la Guerra de Liberación de El Salvador (1980-1992)*. San Salvador: Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional, 2010.
- Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional. "Memoria Histórica para Consolidar los Cambios." *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional*. 27 February 2013. <http://www.fmln.org.sv/oficial/index.php/secretarias-n-f/53-secretaria-nacional-de-memoria-historica/2000-memoria-historica-para-consolidar-los-cambios>.
- Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional. "Presentan edición especial del Informe de la Verdad." *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional*. 21 March 2013. <http://www.fmln.org.sv/oficial/index.php/parlamentarios/asamblea-legislativa/2115-presentan-edicion-especial-del-informe-de-la-verdad181>.
- Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "Recuperación de Víctimas del Conflicto Armado." *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*. <http://www.fafg.org/pagTemas/tema02.htm>.
- Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "Búsqueda de Desaparecidos." *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*. <http://www.fafg.org/pagTemas/tema04.htm>.
- Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "Acompañamiento Psicosocial." *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*. <http://www.fafg.org/pagTemas/Acompa%C3%B1amientoPsicosocial.html>.

Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "Convenio de Colaboración FAFG-MP." *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*.
<http://www.fafg.org/pagTemas/2009Junio.html>.

Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "Cementerio La Verbena: Proyectos de Búsqueda de Desaparecidos." *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*.
<http://www.fafg.org/pagTemas/2010/Enero2010Verbena.html>.

Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "Inicio que Genera Esperanza." *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*.
<http://www.fafg.org/pagTemas/2010/Febrero2010Verbena.html>.

Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "Destino Final de Víctimas de Desaparición Forzada." *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*.
<http://www.fafg.org/pagTemas/2010/Julio2010DestinoFinalVictimas.html>.

Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "Exhumación Osario Dos La Verbena." *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*.
<http://www.fafg.org/pagTemas/2011/Febrero/ExhumacionOsarioDosLaVerbena.html>.

Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "Investigación Cementerio General de Escuintla." *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*.
http://www.fafg.org/pagTemas/2011/Abril/Investigacion_Cementerio_General_de_Escuintla.html.

Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "Primeras Identificaciones de Víctimas Registradas en el Diario Militar." *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*.
http://www.fafg.org/BoletinExterno/Boletin_especial_Noviembre_Esp.html.

Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "Mi nombre No Es XX." *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*. <http://www.fafg.org/pagTemas/2009Mayo.html>.

Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "FAFG." *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*. <http://www.fafg.org/paginas/fafg.htm>.

Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "Casos." *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala*. <http://www.fafg.org/paginas/casos.htm>.

Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. "Entrevista Aura Elena Farfán." http://www.fafg.org/paginas/entrevista_Aurelia_Farfán.htm.

Fundación Guillermo Toriello. *Memorias de los Caídos en la Lucha Revolucionaria de Guatemala: Registro de los Miembros de la Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) Caídos durante los Años del Conflicto Armado, 1971-1996*. Guatemala City: Fundación Guillermo Toriello, 2006.

Fundación Myrna Mack. "De una Guerra a la Otra." Guatemala City: Fundación Myrna Mack, 25 February 2009.

Fundación Myrna Mack, "Justicia Transicional: Una Deuda Pendiente (Extracto de un Estudio a Publicarse en marzo del 2010 Titulado 'Procesos de Justicia Transicional: ¿Cómo Están Cumpliendo los Estados Latinoamericanos con los Estándares Internacionales?' " Guatemala City: Fundación Myrna Mack, 10 January 2010.

Fundación Myrna Mack. "Justicia por los Desaparecidos!: El Diario Militar y la Búsqueda de la Justicia de las Familiares." Guatemala City: Fundación Myrna Mack, 1999.

Fundación Myrna Mack. "Apuntes sobre los Engranajes de la Impunidad en Casos de Violaciones de Derechos Humanos en Guatemala." Guatemala City: Fundación Myrna Mack, 2004.

Fundación Myrna Mack. "Informe sobre el Cierre de la Dirección de los Archivos de la Paz a la Luz de la Justicia Transicional." Guatemala City: Fundación Myrna Mack, 27 June 2012.

Fundación Myrna Mack. Press releases. 2006-2010.

"Informe de la Comisión Especial Investigadora de Reos y Desaparecidos Políticos." *Estudios Centroamericanos* 35 (Jan-Feb 1980): 136-39.

Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia. *El Libro Azul: Política Pública de Resarcimiento*. Guatemala City: Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia, 2003.

Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia. Guatemala. "Actividad 6: Conceptos Fundamentales. ¿Qué Es la Impunidad?" 25 February 2000.
<http://www.edualter.org/material/guatemala/novimpunidad.htm>.

Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia. *Causas, Desarrollo y Consecuencias del Conflicto Armado Interno: Incorporación del Estudio del Conflicto Armado Interno y los Acuerdos de Paz en el Currículo de Educación Secundaria, Guía para Maestras/Maestros*. Guatemala City: Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia, 2002.

Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia. *Cumplimiento de la Recomendación Número 36 de la CEH: Propuesta para la Reforma Educativa (Educación Secundaria)*. Guatemala City: Instancia Multiinstitucional por la Paz y la Concordia, 2009.

Instancia Multiinstitucional para la Paz y la Concordia. *Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento*. Guatemala City: Instancia Multiinstitucional para la Paz y la Concordia.

Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas." "La Agenda Pendiente, Diez Años Después: De la Esperanza Inicial a las Responsabilidades

Compartidas." San Salvador: Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas," 2002.

Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas."
"Memoria en El Salvador." *Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas."*
<http://www.uca.edu.sv/publica/idhuca/memoria.html>.

Joinet, Louis. "The Administration of Justice and the Human Rights of Detainees: Question of the Impunity of Perpetrators of Human Rights Violations (Civil and Political), Final Report Prepared by Mr. Joinet Pursuant to Sub-Commission decisions 1996/119." United Nations Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. 26 June 1997.

Mejía, José. "Juez de Caso 'Masacre El Mozote' Retrasa Decisión de Reabrir Proceso Judicial." *Transparencia Activa*. 9 July 2014. <http://www.transparenciaactiva.gob.sv/juez-de-caso-masacre-el-mozote-retrasa-decision-de-reabrir-proceso-judicial/>.

Mejía, José. "Exhumaciones en El Mozote No Reinician por Conflicto entre Fiscalía y Medicina Legal." *Transparencia Activa*. 10 July 2014.
http://www.transparenciaactiva.gob.sv/exhumaciones-en-el-mozote-no-reinician-por-conflicto-entre-fiscalia-y-medicina-legal/?doing_wp_cron=1426265157.6360390186309814453125.

Mejía, José. "Fiscalía Iniciaría un Nuevo Proceso Judicial en Caso Masacre El Mozote." *Transparencia Activa*, 24 July 2014. <http://www.transparenciaactiva.gob.sv/fiscalia-iniciaria-un-nuevo-proceso-judicial-en-caso-masacre-el-mozote/>.

Ministerio de Educación. *Historia Sinóptica de Guatemala*. Guatemala City: Ministerio de Educación, 1999.

Ministerio de la Defensa Nacional. *Informe de la Comisión de Revisión de la Historia y la Educación Militares*. San Salvador: Ministerio de la Defensa Nacional, 2013.
https://www.scribd.com/fullscreen/250756039?access_key=key-bxqnomPL0jpFTD2i3IQ2&allow_share=true&escape=false&view_mode=scroll.

Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala. *Guatemala: Never Again!* New York: Orbis Books, 1999.

Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala. *Guatemala: Nunca Más, Informe Proyecto Interdiocesano de Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica*. 4 vols. Guatemala City: Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala, 1998.

Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala and Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales. *La Solidaridad Era la Base de Sus Vidas*. Guatemala City: Oficina de

- Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala and Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, 2000.
- Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala. *Testigos de la Fé por la Paz: Vidas Ejemplares de la Iglesia Católica de Guatemala*. Guatemala: Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala, 2003.
- Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala. *Y las Verdad Nos Hará Libres....* Guatemala: Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala, 2005.
- Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala. *Movilizando la Memoria: A 10 Años del REMHI*. Guatemala City: Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala, 2008.
- Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala. *Violencia en Guatemala: Estudio Estadístico en Cinco Departamentos: Chiquimula, Guatemala, Petén, Quetzaltenango y San Marcos*. Guatemala: Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala, 2011.
- Presidencia de la República de El Salvador. "Decreto No. 5." 15 January 2010.
- Presidencia de la República de El Salvador. "Gobierno del Presidente Funes Reconoce la Verdad e Impulsa Medidas de Reparación a Víctimas del Conflicto Armado." 4 June 2012. <http://www.presidencia.gob.sv/index.php/novedades/noticias/item/2542-04-junio-2012/-gobierno-del-presidente-funes-reconoce-la-verdad-e-impulsa-medidas-de-reparaci%C3%B3n-a-v%C3%ADctimas-del-conflicto-armado.html>.
- Presidencia de la República de Guatemala. "Acuerdo Gubernativo Número 258-2003." 7 May 2003.
- Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos. *El Derecho a Saber: Informe Especial del Archivo Histórico de la Policía Nacional*. Guatemala City: Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos, March 2009.
- Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos. *El Defensor del Pueblo*. 2010-2011.
- Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos. "PDDH conmemora el 'Día Internacional de las Víctimas de Desapariciones Forzadas.'" 30 August 2010.
- Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos. "PDDH conmemora 63 Aniversario de la DUDH y 30 Aniversario de El Mozote." 10 December 2012.
- Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos. *Comunicados*. 2013-2014.
- Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo. *Guatemala, ¿Una Economía al Servicio del Desarrollo Humano? Informe Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2007/2008*. Volume I.

- Guatemala City: Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2008.
- Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento. *Informe Final del Director Ejecutivo del PNR*. Guatemala City: Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento, 2005.
- Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento. *Informe de la Evaluación Conjunta del Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento y de los programas de Apoyo al PNR de GTZ y PNUD*. Guatemala City: Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, and Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, 2007.
- Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento. *Informe Anual de Actividades 2008 Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento*. Guatemala City: Programa Nacional de Resarcimiento, 2009.
- Samayoa, Claudia. *Las Ejecuciones Extrajudiciales de Jóvenes Estigmatizados: Dimensión Jurídica, Social y Humana del Fenómeno y la Responsabilidad del Estado de Guatemala sobre la Mal Llamada "Limpieza Social."* Guatemala City: Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos, Instituto de Estudios Comparados en Ciencias Penales de Guatemala, and Asociación para el Estudio y Promoción de la Seguridad en Democracia, 2007.
- Samayoa, Claudia. *El Rostro del Terror: Análisis de los Ataques en contra de Defensores de Derechos Humanos del 2000 al 2003*. Guatemala City: Coalición para la CICIACS, 2004.
- Secretaría de la Paz. *Entre Pasado y Olvido: Políticas de Reconciliación en Guatemala, 1996-2008*. Guatemala City: Secretaría de la Paz, 2009.
- Secretaría de la Paz. *La Primera Encuesta Nacional de Cultura de Paz*. Guatemala City: Secretaría de la Paz, 2011.
- Secretaría de la Paz. *Los Acuerdos de Paz: Una Reflexión 15 Años Después*. Guatemala City: Secretaría de la Paz, 2011.
- Segundo Tribunal Primero de Sentencia Penal, Narcoactividad y Delitos contra el Ambiente. *Sentencia*. 10 May 2013.
- Transparencia Activa. "Secretaría de Cultura Iniciará Reconocimiento y Declaración de Archivos de Tutela Legal como Bien Cultural." *Transparencia Activa*. 14 October 2013. <http://www.transparenciaactiva.gob.sv/secretaria-de-cultura-iniciara-reconocimiento-y-declaracion-de-archivos-de-tutela-legal-como-bien-cultural/>.
- Transparencia Activa. "Presidente Funes Rinde Homenaje y Condecora de Forma Póstuma a Luchadora Social María Julia Hernández." *Transparencia Activa*. 21 November 2013. <http://www.transparenciaactiva.gob.sv/presidente-funes-rinde-homenaje-y-condecora-de-forma-postuma-a-luchadora-social-maria-julia-hernandez/>.

Transparencia Activa. "Inicia Audiencia de Intimación contra Muyschondt por Supuesta Calumnia al Presidente Funes." *Transparencia Activa*. 29 April 2014.
<http://www.transparenciaactiva.gob.sv/inicia-audiencia-de-intimacion-contra-muyschondt-por-supuesta-calumnia-al-presidente-funes/>.

Tutela Legal del Arzobispado. *Propuesta para una Política de Garantía de los Derechos de las Víctimas de Violaciones de los Derechos Humanos*. San Salvador.

United Nations. "Letter Dated 27 January 1992 from the Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General." New York: United Nations, 30 January 1992.

Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas." "Ante el Cierre de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado." *Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas."* 17 October 2013.
<http://www.uca.edu.sv/noticias/texto-2405>.

Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas." "Los muertos que gritan justicia." *Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas."* 4 November 2013.
<http://www.uca.edu.sv/noticias/texto-2438>.

Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas." "Rutilio Grande." *Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas."* 12 March 2014.
<http://www.uca.edu.sv/noticias/editorial-2785>.

INTERVIEWS

Former Member of Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (1). Conversation with author. 2 February 2012.

Former Member of Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (2). Conversation with author. 24 January 2012.

Member of Asociación Pro-Búsqueda de Niñas y Niños Desaparecidos. Conversation with author. 31 May 2012.

Member of Asociación de Veteranos Militares de *El Salvador*. Conversation with author. 30 May 2012.

Member of Asociación Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos de Guatemala. Conversation with author. 26 March 2012.

Member of Asociación para el Avance de la Ciencias Sociales en Guatemala. Conversation with author. 30 January 2012.

Member of Biblioteca Nacional "Francisco Gavadía." Conversation with author. November 2013.

Member of Centro para la Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos. Conversation with author. 12 March 2012.

Member of Comisión de Derechos Humanos de El Salvador. Conversation with author. 29 May 2012.

Member of Comité de Madres y Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos y Asesinados Políticos de El Salvador "Monseñor Óscar Arnulfo Romero." Conversation with author. 7 May 2012.

Member of Equipo Maíz. Conversation with author. 22 May 2012.

Member of Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales. Conversation with author. 6 February 2012.

Member of Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional's Secretaria Nacional de Memoria Histórica. Conversation with author. 6 June 2012.

Member of Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala. Conversation with author. 26 January 2012.

Member of Fundación Guillermo Toriello. Conversation with author. 16 February 2012.

Member of Fundación Rigoberta Menchú Tum. Conversation with author. 1 March 2012.

Member of Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo. Conversation with author. 17 and 19 January 2012.

Member of Instituto de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas." Conversation with author. 27 April 2012.

Member of Instituto de Medicina Legal. Conversation with author. October 2013.

Member of Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (1). Conversation with author. 24 April 2012.

Member of Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (2). Conversation with author. 2 May 2012.

Member of Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala. Conversation with author. 31 January 2012.

Member of Oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado de San Salvador. Conversation with author. 24 May 2012.

Members of Centro para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos "Madeleine Lagadec." Conversation with author. 5 June 2012.

Members of Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional's Secretaria Nacional de Memoria Histórica. Conversation with author. 6 June 2012.

Members of Plaza Pública. Conversation with author. 8 March 2012.

Mérida, Mario (Retired military officer and Former Director of Military Intelligence). Conversation with author. 29 February 2012.

Suasnavar, José (Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala). Conversation with author. October 2013.

SOURCES

"Acuerdo entre las Naciones Unidas y el Gobierno de Guatemala Relativo al Establecimiento de una Comisión de Investigación de Cuerpos Ilegales y Aparatos Clandestinos de Seguridad en Guatemala (CICIACS)." 7 January 2004.

"Acuerdo entre la Organización de Naciones Unidas y el Gobierno de Guatemala Relativo al Establecimiento de una Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Guatemala (CICIG)." 12 December 2006.

Adams, Tani Marilena. *Consumed by Violence: Advances and Obstacles to Building Peace in Guatemala Fifteen Years After the Peace Accords*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, April 2011.

Aguilar, Paloma. *Memory and Amnesia: The Role of the Spanish Civil War in the Transition to Democracy*. Translated by Mark Oakley. New York: Berghahn Books, 2002.

Allison, Michael E. "Leaving the Past Behind?: A Study of the FMLN and URNG Transitions to Political Parties." PhD Diss., Florida State University, 2006.

Amnesty International. *Guatemala's Lethal Legacy: Past Impunity and Renewed Human Rights Violations*. New York: Amnesty International, 2002.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition. New York: Verso, 1991.

Archivos de la Paz. *Niñez Desaparecida en Guatemala como Parte de la Estrategia de la Guerra: Búsqueda, Casos y Efectos*. Guatemala City: Archivos de la Paz, 2010.

Arenas, Clara and Gustavo Palma. *Memoria e Historia: Seminario Internacional en Homenaje a Myrna Mack, 26-30 septiembre 2005*. Guatemala City: Asociación para el Avance de la Ciencias Sociales en Guatemala, 2006.

Argueta, Manlio. *Un Día en la Vida*. San Salvador: UCA Editores, 2008.

- Arnson, Cynthia. "El Salvador: Accountability and Human Rights, the Report of the United Nations Commission on the Truth for El Salvador." *News from Americas Watch* 5 no. 7 (August 10, 1993).
- Arnson, Cynthia, ed. *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999.
- Ashplant, Timothy G., Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, eds. *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Ashplant, Timothy G., Graham Dawson, Michael Roper, eds. *Commemorating War: The Politics of Memory*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004.
- Assmann, Aleida. "The Sun at Midnight: The Concept of Counter-memory and Its Changes." In *Commitment in Reflection: Essays in Literature and Moral Philosophy*, edited by Leona Toker, 223-44. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- Assmann, Jan. *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Augé, Marc. *Las Formas del Olvido*. Barcelona: Editorial Gedisa, 1998.
- Ayala, Edwin Ernesto. *El Tope y Más Allá: Desde la Ofensiva del 89 a los Acuerdos de Paz, Testimonio de un Guerrillo*. San Salvador: Editorial Sombrero Azul, 1997.
- Barahona de Brito, Alexandra, Carmen González-Enríquez, and Paloma Aguilar, eds. *The Politics of Memory: Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Bassiouni, M. Cherif, ed. *Post-Conflict Justice*. Ardsley, NY: Transnational Publishers, 2001.
- Benedetti, Mario. *Variaciones sobre el Olvido*. Rivas-Vaciamadrid: H. Kliczkowski-Onlybook, 2005.
- Bergero, Adriana J. and Fernando Reati, eds. *Memoria Colectiva y Políticas de Olvido: Argentina y Uruguay, 1970-1990*. Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo Editora, 1997.
- Berliner, David. "The Abuses of Memory: Reflections on the Memory Boom in Anthropology." *Anthropological Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (2005): 197-211.
- Berryman, Phillip. *Liberation Theology: The Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movement in Latin American and Beyond*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1987.
- Bibler Coutin, Susan. *Nations of Emigrants: Shifting Boundaries of Citizenship in El Salvador and the United States*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007.

- Binford, Leigh. *The El Mozote Massacre: Anthropology and Human Rights*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996.
- Binford, Leigh. "Violence in El Salvador: A Rejoinder to Philippe Bourgois's 'The Power of Violence in War and Peace.'" *Ethnography* 3, no. 2 (2002): 201-19.
- Binford, Leigh. "A Perfect Storm of Neglect and Failure: Postwar Capitalist Restoration in Northern Morazán, El Salvador." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 37, no. 3 (2010): 531-57.
- Bishai, Linda. "Forgetting Ourselves: Nietzsche, Critical History, and the Politics of Collective Memory," Paper presented at Political Studies Association-UK 50th Annual Conference, London, 10-13 April 2000.
- Blair, Carole, Greg Dickinson, and Brian L. Ott. "Introduction: Rhetoric/Memory/Place." In *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, edited by Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott, 1-55. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010.
- Blustein, Jeffrey. *The Moral Demands of Memory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Bornschein, Dirk. "Reconciliación en Guatemala—Contra un Muro de Silencio." Paper presented at the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Conference, "From Dealing with the Past to Future Cooperation: Regional and Global Challenges of Reconciliation," Berlin, 31 January-2 February 2005.
- Bourgois, Philippe. "The Power of Violence in War and Peace: Post-Cold War Lessons from El Salvador." *Ethnography* 2, no. 5 (2001): 5-34.
- Brahm, Eric. "Truth and Consequences: The Impact of Truth Commissions in Transitional Societies." PhD diss., University of Colorado, 2006.
- Butler, Thomas, ed. *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*. New York: Basil Blackwood, Ltd., 1989.
- Cabrera, Roberto. "Should We Remember? Recovering Historical Memory in Guatemala." In *Past Imperfect: Dealing with the Past in Northern Ireland and South Africa*, edited by Brandon Hamber, 25-30. Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland: INCORE/UU, 1998.
- Cairns, Ed and Mícheál D. Roe, eds. *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan Ltd, 2003.
- Call, Charles T. "Democratisation, War and State-Building: Constructing the Rule of Law in El Salvador." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 35, no. 4 (2003): 827-62.
- Campbell, Robert. "An Emotive Place Apart." *A.I.A. Journal* (May 1983): 150-1.

- Canizalez, Luis. "Dagoberto Gutiérrez: 'Si no hacés justicia en casa, otro la hará.' " *Simpatizantes FMLN*. 11 August 2011. <http://www.simpatizantesfmln.org/blog/archives/7596>.
- Carey Jr., David and M. Gabriella Torres. "Precursors to Femicide: Guatemalan Women in a Vortex of Violence." *Latin American Research Review* 45, no. 3 (2010): 142-64.
- Carmack, Robert M., ed. *Harvest of Violence: The Maya Indians and the Guatemalan Crisis*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.
- Carrier, Peter. "Historical Traces of the Present: The Uses of Commemoration." *Historical Reflections* 22, no. 2 (1996): 431-45.
- Carter, Rodney G.S. "Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence." *Archivaria* 61 (2006): 215-33.
- Casaús Arzú, Marta Elena. *Genocidio: La Máxima Expresión del Racismo en Guatemala?* Guatemala City: F&G Editores, 2008.
- Castellanos Moya, Horacio. *El Arma en el Hombre*. Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 2001.
- Castellanos Moya, Horacio. *El Asco*. Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 2007.
- Castellanos Moya, Horacio. *Tyrant Memory*. New York: New Directions, 2011.
- Cayetano Carpio, Salvador. *Secuestro y Capucha en un País del "Mundo Libre."* San Salvador: UCA Editores, 1979.
- Center for Justice and Accountability. "The Jesuit Massacre Case." *Center for Justice and Accountability*. Accessed 3 March 2013. <http://www.cja.org/article.php?list=type&type=84>.
- Centro de Análisis Forense y Ciencias Aplicadas. "Análisis Criminalístico de los Homicidios de Mujeres en Guatemala." Guatemala City: Centro de Análisis Forense y Ciencias Aplicadas.
- Chatterjee, Partha. "Two Poets and Death: On Civil and Political Society in the Non-Christian World." In *Questions of Modernity*, edited by Timothy Mitchell, 35-48. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- Cienfuegos, Fermán/Eduardo Sancho. *Crónicas entre los Espejos*. San Salvador: UFG Editores, 2002.
- Chávez, Joaquín M. *The Pedagogy of Revolution: Popular Intellectuals and the Origins of the Salvadoran Insurgency, 1960-1980*. PhD diss., New York University, 2010.

- Climo, Jacob J. and Maria G. Cattell, eds. *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*. New York: Altamira Press, 2002.
- Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras, ed. *Plan de Operaciones "Sofía."* Madrid: Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras, 2011.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Copeland, Nick. "'Guatemala Will Never Change': Radical Pessimism and the Politics of Personal Interest in the Western Highlands." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 43, no.3 (2011): 485-515.
- Corado Figueroa, General Humberto. *En Defensa de la Patria: Historia del Conflicto Armado en El Salvador, 1980-1992*. San Salvador: Tecnoimpresos, 2008.
- Cuéllar Martínez, Benjamín. "Los Dos Rostros de la Sociedad Salvadoreña." In *Verdad, Justicia y Reparación: Desafíos para la Democracia y la Convivencia Social*, edited by Gilda Pacheco Oreamuno, Lorena Acevedo Narea, and Guido Galli, 145-174. Stockholm and San José, Costa Rica: Instituto Internacional para la Democracia y la Asistencia Electoral/Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos, 2005.
- Cuéllar Martínez, Benjamín. "El Salvador." In *Victims Unsilenced: The Inter-American Human Rights System and Transitional Justice in Latin America*, edited by Due Process of Law Foundation, 33-70. Washington, DC: Due Process of Law Foundation, 2007.
- Curry, Jane L. "When an Authoritarian State Victimizes the Nation: Transitional Justice, Collective Memory, and Political Divides." *International Journal of Sociology* 37, no. 1 (2007): 58-73.
- Dada, Carlos. "Quemar la Memoria." *El País*. 15 November 2013.
<http://blogs.elpais.com/dadaistmo/2013/11/quemar-la-memoria.html>.
- Dada, Carlos. "The Case for Yes." *International Center for Transitional Justice*. 18 June 2014.
<http://www.ictj.org/debate/article/case-yes>.
- Dalton, Roque. *Miguel Mármol: Los Sucesos de 1932 en El Salvador*. Mexico City: Ocean Sur, 2007.
- Danner, Mark. *The Massacre at El Mozote*. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- Das, Veena. *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- Dean, Carolyn J. *Aversion and Erasure: The Fate of the Victim after the Holocaust*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010.

- de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Randall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- de Kok, Ingrid. "Cracked Heirlooms: Memory on Exhibition." In *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*, edited by Sarah Nuttall and Carlie Coetzee. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- DeLugan, Robin Maria. "Peace, Culture, and Governance in Post-Civil War El Salvador (1992-2000)." *Journal of Human Rights* 4, no. 2 (2005): 233-49.
- Díaz, Nidia. *Nunca Estuve Sola*. San Salvador: UCA Editores, 1988.
- Dickinson, Greg, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott, eds. *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010.
- Dickson-Gómez, Julia. "'One Who Doesn't Know War, Doesn't Know Anything': The Problem of Comprehending Suffering in Postwar El Salvador." *Anthropology and Humanism* 29, no. 2 (2003): 145-58.
- Didion, Joan. *Salvador*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983.
- Donado Vivar, Juan Ramón. "Aporte de la Antropología Social a la Investigación Forense para Casos de Desastres Naturales (Cantón Cúa, Municipio de Tacaná, Departamento de San Marcos, 2005-2006)." Thesis, Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, 2008.
- Doss, Erika. *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- Doyle, Kate. "Guatemalan Death Squad Dossier: Internal Military Log Reveals Fate of 183 'Disappeared.'" *National Security Archive*. 20 May 1999.
<http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB15/>.
- Doyle, Kate. "Death Squad Dossier: Guatemalan Military Logbook of the Disappeared." *National Security Archive*. 1 July 2008.
<http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/guatemala/logbook/index.htm>.
- Doyle, Kate and Jesse Franzblau. "Historical Archives Lead to Arrest of Police Officers in Guatemalan Disappearance." *The National Security Archive*. 17 March 2009.
<http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB273/>.
- Drouin, Marc. "To the Last Seed: Atrocity Crimes in the Genocidal Continuum in Guatemala, 1978-1984." MA thesis, Concordia University, 2006.
- Drouin, Marc. "Understanding the 1982 Guatemalan Genocide." In *State Violence and Genocide in Latin America: The Cold War Years*, edited by Marcia Esparza, Henry R. Huttenbach, and Daniel Feierstein, 81-103. New York: Routledge, 2011.

- Druliolle, Vincent. "H.I.J.O.S. and the Spectacular Denunciation of Impunity: The Struggle for Memory, Truth, and Justice and the (Re-)Construction of Democracy in Argentina." *Journal of Human Rights* 12, no. 2 (2013): 259-76.
- Duarte, José Napoleón. With Diana Page. *Duarte: My Story*. New York: GP Putnam's Sons, 1986.
- Edkins, Jenny. *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Edmondson, Ray. *Memoria del Mundo: Directrices para la Salvaguardia del Patrimonio Documental*. Paris: UNESCO, División de la Sociedad y de la Información, 2002.
- Ekern, Stener. "The Modernizing Bias of Human Rights: Stories of Mass Killings and Genocide in Central America." *Journal of Genocide Research* 12, no. 3-4 (2010): 219-41.
- España Nájera, Annabella. "Party Systems and Democracy after the Conflicts: El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua." PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2009.
- Evans, Martin and Ken Lunn, eds. *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Berg, 1997.
- Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales. "De la Experiencia Salvadoreña a la Esperanza Guatemalteca: Acuerdos de Paz en El Salvador y Guatemala, International Conference, 14-15 January 1997." San Salvador: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, 1997.
- Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales. "Entrevista con José Suasnavar (FAFG), por FLACSO-Guatemala." *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales*. Accessed 3 Octubre 2013. <http://www.flacso.edu.gt/portal/?p=7876>.
- Falla, Ricardo. *Massacres in the Jungle: Ixcán, Guatemala, 1975-1982*. Translated by Julia Howland. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994.
- Falla, Ricardo. *Quiché Rebelde: Religious Conversion, Politics, and Ethnic Identity in Guatemala*. Translated by Philip Berryman. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001.
- Fairclough, Norman. *Language and Power*. Harlow, UK: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1989.
- Fein, Helen. *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective*. London: Sage Publications, 1993.
- Ferrán, Ofelia. *Working through Memory: Writing and Remembrance in Contemporary Spanish Narrative*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007.

- Fischer, Edward and R. McKenna Brown, eds. *Maya Cultural Activism in Guatemala*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996.
- Flores, Carlos Y. *Bajo la Cruz: Memoria y Dimensión Sobrenatural del Gran Sufrimiento entre los Q'eqchi' de Alta Verapaz*. Coban, Guatemala: Ak' Kutan Centro Bartolomé de las Casas, 2001.
- Fondebrider, Luis. *Uncovering Evidence: The Forensic Sciences in Human Rights*. Minneapolis: The Center for Victims of Torture, New Tactics in Human Rights Project, 2004.
<https://www.newtactics.org/sites/default/files/resources/Uncovering-Evidence-EN.pdf>.
- Fondebrider, Luis and Mercedes Doretta. "Forensics." In *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, vol. 1, edited by Dinah Shelton. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005.
<http://find.galegroup.com/gic/infomark.do?&source=gale&idigest=003cdad854f3479a09e7dd1aac53b235&prodId=GIC&userGroupName=23mbss&tabID=T001&docId=CX3434600140&type=retrieve&contentSet=EBKS&version=1.0>.
- Forster, Cindy. *The Time of Freedom: Campesino Workers in Guatemala's October Revolution*. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 2001.
- Foucault, Michel. *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Edited and with an Introduction by Donald F. Bouchard. Translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Edited by Colin Gordon. Translated by Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper. Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1980.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Foucault, Michel. *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the College de France, 1975-6*. Edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fortana. New York: Picador, 2003.
- Foucault, Michel. *Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979*. Edited by Michael Senellart. Translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Picador, 2010.
- Freedom House. "Freedom in the World, 2011: El Salvador." Accessed 17 March 2015.
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/el-salvador#.VQiuqGYjhG4>.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-analysis II)." In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Volume XII (1911-1913): The Case of Schreber Papers on Technique and Other Works*, with Anna Freud, translated by James Strachey, 147-156. London: The Hogarth Press, 1974.

- Fundación Madrid Paz y Solidariedad, ed. "Plan de Operaciones 'Sofía.' " Madrid: Fundación Madrid Paz y Solidariedad, 2011.
- Gaborit, Mauricio. "Memoria Histórica: Revertir la Historia desde las Víctimas." *Estudios Centroamericanos* 61, no. 693-694 (2006): 663-84.
- Gaborit, Mauricio. "Memoria Histórica: Relato desde las Víctimas." *Pensamiento Psicológico* 2, no. 6 (2006): 7-20.
- Galeas, Marvin. *Crónicas de Guerra: Para Contar la Guerra*. San Salvador: Editorial Cinco, 2008.
- Garavito, Marco Antonio. "Violencia Política e Inhibición Social: Estudio Psicosociales la Realidad Guatemalteca." Guatemala City: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2003.
- García, Erick. *Los Detractores de la CICIACS: Análisis del Discurso*. Guatemala City: Coalición para la CICIACS, 2004.
- García Guevara, Aldo Vladimir. *Military Justice and Social Control: El Salvador, 1931-1960*. PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2007.
- Garibay, David. "A Peace Built on Forgetting Demobilised Combatants in Post-war El Salvador." *International Social Science Journal* 58, no. 189 (2006): 467-78.
- Gillis, John R., ed. *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Gleijeses, Piero. *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Goldman, Francisco. *The Art of Political Murder: Who Killed the Bishop?* New York: Grove Press, 2007.
- Goldman, Francisco. "El Asesinato Alcanza al Obispo." *Letras Libres*. September 1999. <http://www.letraslibres.com/revista/convivio/el-asesinato-alcanza-al-obispo>.
- Goldstone, Richard. "The United Nations' War Crimes Tribunals: An Assessment." *Connecticut Journal of International Law* 12 (1996-1997): 227-40.
- Gómez Isa, Felipe. *El Derecho a la Memoria*. Bilbao: Alberdania, S.L., 2006.
- Gordon, Colin. *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Gott, Richard. *Guerrilla Movements in Latin America*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1972.

- Gould, Jeffrey L. and Aldo Lauria-Santiago. *To Rise in Darkness: Revolution, Repression, and Memory in El Salvador, 1920-1932*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.
- Gould, Kevin A. and Alicia Ivonne Estrada. "Framing Disappearance: H.I.J.@.S., Public Art and the Making of Historical Memory of the Guatemalan Civil War." *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 13, no. 1 (2014): 100-34.
- Gramsci, Antonio. "The Intellectuals." In *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, 131-161. New York: International Publishers, 1971.
- Grandin, Greg. *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Grandin, Greg. "Chronicles of a Guatemalan Genocide Foretold Violence, Trauma, and the Limits of Historical Inquiry." *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 2 (2000): 391-412.
- Grandin, Greg. *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin American in the Cold War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Grandin, Greg. "The Instruction of Great Catastrophe: Truth Commissions, National History, and State Formation in Argentina, Chile, and Guatemala." *The American Historical Review* 110, no. 1 (2005): 46-67.
- Granovsky-Larsen, Simon. *La CICIACS: Defensores de Derechos Humanos y el Estado de Derecho en la Pos-Guerra*. Guatemala City: Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo, 2007.
- Gray, Peter and Kendrick Oliver. "The Memory of Catastrophe." *History Today* 51, no. 2 (2001): 9-15.
- Green, Linda. *Fear as a Way of Life: Mayan War Widows in Rural Guatemala*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Grenier, Yvon. *The Emergency of Insurgency in El Salvador: Ideology and Political Will*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999.
- Griswold, Charles L. and Stephen S. Griswold. "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography." *Critical Inquiry* 12, no.4 (1986): 688-719.
- Gross, David. *Lost Time: On Remembering and Forgetting in Late Modern Culture*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000.
- Gutiérrez, Edgar. "Memory and Reconciliation: The Story of Guatemala." London: World Association for Christian Communities, 2001.

- Guzmán Orellana, Gloria and Irantzu Mendiá Azkue. *Mujeres con Memoria: Activistas del Movimiento de Derechos Humanos en El Salvador*. Bilbao: Hegoa, 2013.
- Hacking, Ian. *The Taming of Chance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *The Collective Memory*. Translated by Francis J Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter. New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1980.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Edited, translated, and with an introduction by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Hale, Charles R. "Consciousness, Violence, and the Politics of Memory in Guatemala." *Current Anthropology* 38, no. 5 (1997): 817-38.
- Hale, Charles R. "Does Multiculturalism Menace? Governance, Cultural Rights and the Politics of Identity in Guatemala." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34, no. 3 (2002): 485-524.
- Hall McLeod, Lisa A. *Constructing Peace: Lessons from UN Peacebuilding Operations in El Salvador and Colombia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006.
- Handy, Jim. *Gift of the Devil: a History of Guatemala*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 1984.
- Handy, Jim. *Revolution in the Countryside: Rural Conflict and Agrarian Reform in Guatemala, 1944-1954*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994.
- Handy, Jim. "Democratizing What? Some Reflections on Nation, State, Ethnicity, Modernity, Community and Democracy in Guatemala." *Canadian Journal of Latin American Caribbean Studies* 27, no. 53 (2002): 35-71.
- Handy, Jim. "Chicken Thieves, Witches, and Judges: Vigilante Justice and Customary Law in Guatemala." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 36, no. 3 (2004): 533-61.
- Handy, Jim. "Of Innocence and Lost History in Guatemala: Notes for a Round Table on Historicizing Revolution in Central America." American Historical Association Meeting, Boston, MA, January 2011.
- Harbury, Jennifer. *Searching for Everardo: A Story of Love, War, and the CIA in Guatemala*. New York: Warner Books, 1997.
- Harris, Verne. "Seeing (in) Blindness: South Africa, Archives, and Passion for Justice." *Archifacts* (October 2001): 1-13.
- Hayner, Priscilla B. "Fifteen Truth Commissions—1974 to 1994: A Comparative Study." *Human Rights Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1994): 597-655.

- Hayner, Priscilla B. *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Heidenry, Rachel. "The Murals of El Salvador: Reconstruction, Historical Memory and Whitewashing." *Public Art Dialogue* 4, no. 1 (2014): 122-45.
- Hellman, Lillian. *Pentimento: A Book of Portraits*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973.
- Hernández Pico, Juan. *Terminar la Guerra, Traicionar la Paz: Guatemala en las Dos Presidencias de la Paz, Arzú y Portillo (1996-2004)*. Guatemala City: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, 2005.
- Hume, Mo. "Contesting Imagined Communities: Gender, Nation, and Violence in El Salvador." In *Political Violence and the Construction of National Identity in Latin America*, edited by Will Fowler and Peter Lambert, 73-90. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.
- Hume, Mo. "The Myths of Violence : Gender, Conflict, and Community in El Salvador." *Latin American Perspectives* 35, no. 5 (2008): 59-76.
- Hunt, Tristram. "Whose Truth?: Objective Truth and a Challenge for History." *Criminal Law Forum* 15 (2004): 193-98.
- Hutton, Patrick H. *History as an Art of Memory*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993.
- Hutton, Patrick H. "Recent Scholarship on Memory and History." *The History Teacher* 33, no. 4 (2000): 533-48.
- Huyssen, Andreas. *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Huyssen, Andreas. "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia." In *Globalization*, edited by Arjun Appadurai, 57-77. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Ibáñez, Ana Cristina. "El Salvador: War and Untold Stories." In *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors?: Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, edited by Caroline O. N. Moser and Fiona C. Clark 117-130. London: Zed Books, 2001.
- Impunity Watch. "Reconociendo el Pasado: Desafíos para Combatir la Impunidad en Guatemala: Reumen y Recomendaciones." Guatemala City: Concorcio Impunity Watch-Guatemala, 2008.
- Impunity Watch and Convergencia por los Derechos Humanos, eds. *La Persistencia de la Verdad: A Diez Años del Informe de la CEH*. Guatemala: Editorial Serviprensa, 2009.

- International Center for Transitional Justice. *Challenging the Conventional: Can Truth Commissions Strengthen Peace Processes?* 2014.
<https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Report-KAF-TruthCommPeace-2014.pdf>.
- Isaza, Carmenza Clara Rodríguez, and Patricia Linares P. "Los Archivos y el Deber de Memoria del Estado. Marco Jurídico." Bogotá: Dirección Archivo de Bogotá, 2010.
- Izaguirre, Ines. "Recapturing the Memory of Politics." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 31, no. 6 (1998): 28-35.
- Jelin, Elizabeth. "The Politics of Memory: The Human Rights Movement and Construction of Democracy in Argentina." *Latin American Perspectives* 21, no. 2 (1994): 38-58.
- Jelin, Elizabeth. "The Minefields of Memory." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 32, no. 2 (1998): 23-9.
- Jelin, Elizabeth. "Memorias en Conflicto." *Puentes* 1, no. 1 (2000): 6-13.
- Jelin, Elizabeth. *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*. Translated by Judy Rein and Marcial Godoy-Anatívia. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Jerez-Farrán, Carlos and Samuel Amago, eds. *Unearthing Franco's Legacy: Mass Graves and the Recovery of Historical Memory in Spain*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010.
- Johnson, Lyman L., ed. *Body Politics: Death, Dismemberment, and Memory in Latin America*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004.
- Johnson, Richard and Gregor McLennan, eds. *Making Histories: Studies in History-writing and Politics*. London: Hutchinson, 1983.
- Jonas, Suzanne. *The Battle for Guatemala: Rebels, Death Squads, and US Power*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991.
- Jonas, Suzanne. "The Peace Accords: An End and a Beginning." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 30, no. 6 (1997): 6-10.
- Jonas, Susanne. *Of Centaurs and Doves: Guatemala's Peace Process*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000.
- Joseph, Gilbert M. and Daniel Nugent, eds. *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994.
- Konefal, Betsy. *For Every Indio Who Falls: A History of Maya Activism in Guatemala, 1960-1990*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010.

- Koonings, Kees and Dirk Kruijt, eds. *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America*. New York: Zed Books, 1999.
- Koonings, Kees and Dirk Kruijt, eds. *Armed Actors: Organized Violence and State Failure in Latin America*. New York: Zed Books, 2004.
- Keune, Lou. *Sobrevivimos la Guerra: La Historia de los Pobladores de Arcatao y de San José de las Flores*. San Salvador: Adelina Editores, 1995.
- Kundera, Milan. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980.
- LaCapra, Dominick. "Trauma, Absence, Loss." *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 4 (1999): 696-727.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- Ladutke, Lawrence Michael. *Freedom of Expression in El Salvador: The Struggle for Human Rights and Democracy*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, 2004.
- Langer, Lawrence L. *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.
- Laplante, Lisa J. and Kelly Phenicie. "Media, Trials and Truth Commissions: 'Mediating' Reconciliation in Peru's Transitional Justice Process." *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 4 (2010): 207-29.
- Lasalle-Klein, Robert. *Blood and Ink: Ignacio Ellacuría, Jon Sobrino, and the Jesuit Martyrs of the University of Central America*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014.
- Lawson, Chappell and Sallie Hughes. "Latin American's Postauthoritarian Media." In *(Un)Civil Societies: Human Rights and Democratic Transitions in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, edited by Rachel A. May and Andrew K. Milton 163-196. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005.
- Lauria-Santiago, Aldo. *An Agrarian Republic: Commercial Agriculture and the Politics of Peasant Communities in El Salvador, 1823-1914*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999.
- Lauria-Santiago, Aldo and Leigh Binford, eds. *Landscapes of Struggle: Politics, Society, and Community in El Salvador*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004.
- le Goff, Jacques. *History and Memory*. Translated by Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.
- Leogrande, William. *Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977-1992*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

- Levenson, Deborah. *Adiós Niño: The Gangs of Guatemala City and the Politics of Death*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013.
- Levi, Primo. *The Drowned and the Saved*. New York: Summit Books, 1988.
- Lindo-Fuentes, Héctor, Erik Ching, and Rafael A Lara-Martínez. *Remembering a Massacre in El Salvador: The Insurrection of 1932, Roque Dalton, and the Politics of Historical Memory*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007.
- López, Fernando. *Módulo de Capacitación Dirigido a Fiscales del Ministerio Público: Naturaleza y Persecución Penal de los Crímenes Internacional Perpetrados durante el Conflict Armado Interno*. Guatemala City: Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala, 2008.
- López Vigil, José Ignacio. *Las Mil y Una Historias de Radio Venceremos*. San Salvador: UCA Editores, 1991.
- Lorenzano, Sandra and Ralph Buchenhorst, eds. *Políticas de la Memoria: Tensiones en la Palabra y la Imagen*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Gorla, 2007.
- Lowenthal, David. *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Macdonald, Mandy and Mike Gatehouse. *In the Mountains of Morazán: Portrait of a Returned Refugee Community in El Salvador*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1995.
- Mack, Helen. "La Reconciliación en Guatemala: Un Proceso Ausente." In *Verdad, Justicia y Reparación: Desafíos para la Democracia y la Convivencia Social*, edited by Gilda Pacheco Oreamuno, Lorena Acevedo Narea, and Guido Galli, 175-204. Stockholm and San José, Costa Rica: Instituto Internacional para la Democracia y la Asistencia Electoral/Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos, 2005.
- Mack, Helen. *Verdad y Justicia: Discursos y Ponencias Escogidos*. Guatemala City: Fundación Myrna Mack, 2007.
- MacLean, Emi. *Judging a Dictator: The Trial of Guatemala's Ríos Montt*. New York: Open Society Justice Initiative, 2013.
- Mahon, Michael. *Foucault's Nietzschean Genealogy: Truth, Power and the Subject*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Manz, Beatriz. *Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror, and Hope*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

- Manz, Beatriz, Elizabeth Oglesby, and José García Noval. *De la Memoria a la Reconstrucción Histórica*. Guatemala City: Asociación para el Avance de la Ciencias Sociales en Guatemala, 1999.
- Martínez, Ana Guadalupe. *Las Cárceles Clandestinas de El Salvador: Libertad por el Secuestro de un Oligarca*. San Salvador: UCA Editores, 1992.
- Mastrini, Guillermo and Martín Becerra. *Los Monopolios de la Verdad: Descifrando la Estructura y Concentración de los Medios en Centroamérica y República Dominicana*. Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros, 2009.
- McAllister, Carlota. *Good People: Revolution, Community, and Conciencia in a Maya-K'iche' Village in Guatemala*. PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2003.
- McClintock, Cynthia. *Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador's FMLN and Peru's Shining Path*. Washington, DC: Unites States Institute for Peace, 1998.
- McHoul, Alec and Wendy Grace. *A Foucault Primer: Discourse, Power and the Subject*. New York: New York University Press, 1993.
- Megill, Allan. *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error: A Contemporary Guide to Practice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Menchú, Rigoberta. *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Edited by Elizabeth Burgos-Debray. Translated by Ann Wright. London: Verso, 1984.
- Menchú, Rigoberta. *Crossing Borders*. Translated by Ann Wright. New York: Verso, 1998.
- Mérida, Mario. *La Historia Negada: Compendio Acerca del Conflicto Armado Interno en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: 2010.
- Minow, Martha. *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Violence*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998.
- Misztal, Barbara A. "Memory and Democracy." *American Behavioral Scientist* 48 (2005): 1320-38.
- Morales Santos, Francisco. "The Time Will Come." In *Our Culture is Our Resistance: Repression, Refuge, and Healing in Guatemala*, photographs by Jonathan Moller, 128. New York: Powerhouse Books, 2004.
- Moller, Jonathan "Jonás" and Derrill Bazy, eds. *Rescatando Nuestra Historia: Represión, Refugio y Recuperación de las Poblaciones Desarraigadas por la Violencia en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: F&G Editores, 2009.

- Moodie, Ellen. "Microbus Crashes and Coca-Cola Cash: The Value of Death in 'Free-market' El Salvador." *American Ethnologist* 33, no. 1 (2006): 63-80.
- Moodie, Ellen. "Seventeen Years, Seventeen Murders: Biospectacularity and the Production of Post-Cold War Knowledge in El Salvador." *Social Text* 99 27, no. 2 (2009): 77-103.
- Moodie, Ellen. *El Salvador in the Aftermath of Peace: Crime, Uncertainty, and the Transition to Democracy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.
- Montejo, Victor. *Voices from Exile: Violence and Survival in Modern Maya History*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999.
- Montobio, Manuel. *La Metamorfosis de Pulgarcito: Transición Política y Proceso de Paz en El Salvador*. Barcelona: Icaria Editorial, s.a., 1999.
- Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida. *Y la Montaña Habló: Testimonios de Guerrilleras y Colaboradoras*. San Salvador: Mujeres por la Dignidad y la Vida, 1997.
- Muller, Jan-Werner, ed. *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Negroponte, Diana Villiers. "Conflict Resolution at the End of the Cold War: The Case of El Salvador, 1989-1994." PhD Diss., Georgetown University, 2005.
- Negroponte, Diana Villiers. *Seeking Peace in El Salvador: The Struggle to Reconstruct a Nation at the End of the Cold War*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Nelson, Diane M. *A Finger in the Wound: Body Politics in Quincentennial Guatemala*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Nelson, Diane M. *Reckoning: The Ends of War in Guatemala*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Use and Abuse of History*. Translated by Adrian Collins. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co, Inc., 1949.
- Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*." *Representations* Special Issue: "Memory and Countermemory" 26 (1989): 1-6.
- Nora, Pierre. *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*. Volume 1, *Conflicts and Divisions*. Under the Direction of Pierre Nora. Edited and with a foreword by Lawrence D. Kritzman. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

- Nora, Pierre. *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*. Under the direction of Pierre Nora. English language edition edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Nora, Pierre. *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire*. Under the direction of Pierre Nora. Translated by Mary Trouille. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001.
- Núñez Handal, Vanessa. *Díos Tenía Miedo*. Guatemala City: F&G Editores, 2011.
- Oakes, Margaret G. "Cultural Aspects of Trauma: Civilian Reactions to War in Rural El Salvador." *Journal of Social Work Research and Evaluation* 5, no. 1 (2004): 49-61.
- Oettler, Anika. "Encounters with History: Dealing with the 'Present Past' in Guatemala." *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 81 (2006): 3-19.
- Offit, Thomas A., and Garret Cook. "The Death of Don Pedro: Insecurity and Cultural Continuity in Peacetime Guatemala." *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 15, no. 1 (2010): 42-65.
- Oglesby, Elizabeth. "Historical Memory and the Limits of Peace Education: Examining Guatemala's *Memory of Silence* and the Politics of Curriculum Design." In *Teaching the Violent Past: History Aducation and Reconciliation*, edited by Elizabeth A Cole, 175-203. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007.
- Oglesby, Elizabeth and Amy Ross. "Guatemala's Genocide Determination and the Spatial Politics of Justice." *Space and Polity* 13, no. 1 (2009): 21-39.
- Olick, Jeffrey K. and Joyce Robbins. "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105-40.
- Olmo, Dario M. "Crimes against Humanity." In *Forensic Anthropology and Medicine: Complementary Sciences From Recovery to Cause of Death*, edited by A. Schmitt, E. Cunha, and J. Pinheiro, 409-30. Totowa, NJ: Humana Press Inc., 2006.
- Open Society Justice Initiative. "Judging a Dictator: The Trial of Guatemala's Ríos Montt." New York: Open Society Justrice Initiative, 2013.
<http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/judging-dicattor-trial-guatemala-rios-montt-11072013.pdf>.
- Osiel, Mark. *Mass Atrocity, Collective Memory, and the Law*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997.
- Osiel, Mark J. "Making Public Memory, Publicly." In *Human Rights in Political Transitions: Gettysburg to Bosnia*, edited by Carla Hesse and Robert Post, 217-61. New York: Zone Books, 1999.

- Passerini, Luisa, ed. *International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories* Volume 1, *Memory and Totalitarianism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Passerini, Luisa. "Memories between Silence and Oblivion." In *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, edited by Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, 238-254. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Payeras, Mario. *Days of the Jungle: The Testimony of a Guatemalan Guerrillero, 1972-1976*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983.
- Pedraza Fariña, Laura, Spring Miller, and James Cavallaro. *No Place to Hide: Gang, State, and Clandestine Violence in El Salvador*. Cambridge: Harvard Law School, 2010.
- Peterson, Brandt Gustav. "Unsettled Remains: Race, Trauma, and Nationalism in Millennial El Salvador." PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2005.
- Peterson, Brandt Gustav. "Consuming Histories: The Return of the Indian in Neoliberal El Salvador." *Cultural Dynamics* 18, no. 2 (2006): 163-88.
- Pheko, Liepollo Lebohang. "Twist Memory and You Distort Identity," *Mail and Guardian*. 10 October 2014. <http://mg.co.za/article/2014-10-09-twist-memory-and-you-distort-identity>.
- Popkin, Margaret. *Peace without Justice: Obstacles to Building the Rule of Law in El Salvador*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000.
- Popkin, Margaret. "The Salvadoran Truth Commission and the Search for Justice." *Criminal Law Forum* 15 (2004): 105-24.
- Popular Memory Group. "Popular Memory: Theory, Politics, Method." In *Making Histories: Studies in History-writing and Politics*, edited by Richard Johnson, et al. London: Hutchinson, 1982.
- Porras Castejón, Gustavo. *Guatemala: Ten Years after the Agreements on a Firm and Lasting Peace*. Washington: National Dialogues on Democracy in Latin America, 2008.
- Porras Castejón, Gustavo. *Las Huellas de Guatemala*. Guatemala: F&G Editores, 2009.
- Prisk, Courtney E., ed. *The Comandante Speaks: Memoirs of an El Salvadoran Guerrilla Leader*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1991.
- Quinn, Joanna R. and Mark Freeman. "Lessons Learned: Practical Lessons Gleaned from inside the Truth Commissions of Guatemala and South Africa." *Human Rights Quarterly* 25 (2003): 1117-49.
- Remijnse, Simonne. *Memories of Violence: Civil Patrols and the Legacy of Conflict in Joyabaj, Guatemala*. Amsterdam: Rozenberg Publishers, 2002.

- Renan, Ernest. *Qu'est-ce que qu'une une nation? / What Is a Nation?* Translated by Wanda Romer Taylor. Toronto: Tapir Press, 1996.
- Rey Tristán, Eduardo and Pilar Cagiao Vila, eds. *Conflicto, Memoria y Pasado Traumáticos: El Salvador Contemporáneo*. Santiago de Compostela: Universidade de Santiago Compostela, 2011.
- Reynolds, Louisa. *The Long Road to Justice: Survivors of the Dos Erres Massacre Tell Their Story*. Guatemala City: Plaza Pública, 2013.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*. Edited by Mark I. Wallace. Translated by David Pellauer. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Rieff, David. "After 9/11: The Limits of Remembrance." *Harper's*. August 2011. <http://harpers.org/archive/2011/08/after-911/>.
- Rincón, Omar, ed. *¿Por Qué Nos Odian Tanto? Estado y Medios de Comunicación en América Latina*. Bogotá: Centro de Competencia en Comunicación para América Latina and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010.
- Rodríguez B., Alejandro. *El Problema de la Impunidad en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: Asociación para el Avance de la Ciencias Sociales en Guatemala, 1996.
- Roseberry, William. "Hegemony and the Language of Contention." In *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, edited by Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, 355-66. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994.
- Roseberry, William. "Hegemony, Power, and Languages of Contention." In *The Politics of Difference: Ethnic Premises in a World of Power*, edited by Edwin N. Wilmsen and Patrick McAllister, 71-84. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Rosenberg, Tina. "What Did You Do in the War, Mama?" *New York Times Magazine*. 7 February 1999. <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/02/07/magazine/what-did-you-do-in-the-war-mama.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>.
- Rousso, Henry. *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Rugamas Morán, José Roberto. "Prólogo para UNPO (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization)." *Pro-Búsqueda*. 27 January 2014. <http://www.probusqueda.org.sv/prologo/>.

- Runia, Eelco. "Forget about It: 'Parallel Processing' in the Srebrenica Report." *History and Theory* 43 (2004): 295-320.
- Runia, Eelco. "Burying the Dead, Creating the Past." *History and Theory* 46 (2007): 313-25.
- Sachs, Albie. "Archives, Truth, and Reconciliation." *Archivaria* 62 (Fall 2006): 1-14.
- Sánchez Cerén, Salvador. *Con Sueños Se Escribe la Vida: Autobiografía de un Revolucionario Salvadoreño*. Mexico City: Ocean Sur, 2008.
- Sáenz de Tejada, Ricardo. *Victimas o Vencedoras? Una Aproximación al Movimiento de los Ex PAC*. Guatemala City: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, 2004.
- Sáenz de Tejada, Ricardo. *Elecciones, Participación Política y Pueblo Maya en Guatemala*. Guatemala City: Instituto de Gerencia Política, 2005.
- Sáena de Tejada, Ricardo. *Revolucionarios en Tiempos de Paz: Rompimientos y Recomposición en las Izquierdas de Guatemala y El Salvador*. Guatemala City: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, 2007.
- Sáenz de Tejada, Ricardo. *Oliverio: Una Biografía del Secretario General de la AEU 1978-1979*. Guatemala: F&G Editores, 2011.
- Sanford, Victoria. *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala*. New York: Palgrave, 2003.
- Schirmer, Jennifer. *The Guatemalan Military Project: A Violence Called Democracy*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998.
- Schirmer, Jennifer. "Appropriating the Indigenous, Creating Complicity: the Guatemalan Military and the Sanctioned Maya." In *The Politics of Ethnicity: Indigenous Peoples in Latin American States*, edited by David Maybury-Lewis. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Schlesinger, Stephen and Stephen Kinzer. *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.
- "Se declara Bien Cultural de la Nación al caserío Las Aradas, Chalatenango." *El Salvador Noticias.net*. 15 May 2012. <http://www.elsalvadornoticias.net/2012/05/15/declaran-bien-cultural-de-la-nacion-al-caserio-las-aradas-chalatenango>
- Seguridad en Democracia. "CICIACS: Sistematización de un Proceso." Guatemala City: Seguridad en Democracia, June 2004.

- Seider, Rachel. "Guatemala's Politics of Memory." *New Routes* 4 (1998): 7-10.
- Shafir, Isabel Piper. "Memoria Colectiva y Relaciones de Género: ¿Prácticas de Dominación o Resistencia?" *Realidad* 85 (2002): 31-43.
- Sherman, Daniel J. *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Short, Nicola. *The International Politics of Post-conflict Reconstruction in Guatemala*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Silber, Irina Carlota. *A Spectral Reconciliation: Rebuilding Post-War El Salvador*. PhD diss., New York University, 2000.
- Silber, Irina Carlota. "Commemorating the Past in Postwar El Salvador." In *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation on Public Space*, edited by Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lisa Maya Knauer, 211-232. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Silber, Irina Carlota. "Mothers/Fighters/Citizens: Violence and Disillusionment in Post-War El Salvador." *Gender & History* 16, no.3 (2004): 561-87.
- Silber, Irina Carlota. *Everyday Revolutionaries: Gender, Violence, and Disillusionment in Postwar El Salvador*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011.
- Simon, Jean-Marie. *Guatemala: Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1988.
- Smith, Patrick. "Memory Without History: Who Owns Guatemala's Past?" *Washington Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2001): 59-72.
- Smith, Timothy J. and Thomas A. Offit. "Confronting Violence in Postwar Guatemala: An Introduction." *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 15, no. 1 (2010): 1-15.
- Snodgrass Godoy, Angelina. *Popular Injustice: Violence, Community, and Law in Latin America*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2006.
- Sosa, Cecelia. "Operación Masacre." *La Página*. 12 March 2006.
<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/radar/9-2866-2006-03-12.html>.
- Spence, Jack. "War and Peace in Central America: Comparing Transitions toward Democracy and Social Equity in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua." Brookline, MA: Hemisphere Initiatives, 2004.
- Sprenkels, Ralph, ed. *El Día Más Esperado: Buscando a los Niños Desaparecidos de El Salvador*. San Salvador: UCA Editores, 2001.

- Sprenkels, Ralph. *The Price of Peace: The Human Rights Movement in Postwar El Salvador*. Amsterdam: Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation, 2005.
- Sprenkels, Ralph. "La Guerra como Gontroverisia: Una Reflexión sobre las Secuelas Políticas del Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad para El Salvador." *Identidades* 2, no. 4 (2012): 68-89.
- Stanley, William Deane. "El Salvador: State-Building before and after Democratisation, 1980-95." *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2006): 101-14
- Stedman, Stephen John, Donald Rothchild, and Eizabeth M Cousens, eds. *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002.
- Steinberg, Michael K. and Matthew J. Taylor. "Public Memory and Political Power in Guatemala's Postconflict Landscape." *Geographical Review* 93, no. 4 (2003): 449-68.
- Stern, Steve J. *Remembering Pinochet's Chile: On the Eve of London 1998*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Stern, Steve J. *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973-1988*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Stern, Steve J. *Reckoning with Pinochet: The Memory Question in Democratic Chile, 1989-2006*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Stoll, David. *Between Two Armies in the Ixil Towns of Guatemala*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- Stoll, David. *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999.
- Stoll, David. *Guatemala—Was It Genocide?* 31 October 2013.
<http://sites.middlebury.edu/dstoll/files/2013/10/Guatemala-Was-It-Genocide.pdf>.
- Streeter, Stephen. *Managing the Counter-Revolution: The United States & Guatemala, 1954-1961*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001.
- Striffler, Steve. *In the Shadows of State and Capital: The United Fruit Company, Popular Struggle, and Agrarian Restructuring in Ecuador, 1900-1995*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Sturken, Marita. *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Suyinka, Wole. *The Burden of Memory, the Muse of Forgiveness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

- Taracena Arriola, Arturo. "La experiencia de un Historiador en la Comisión de Esclarecimiento Histórico de Guatemala." Edited by Anne Pérotin-Dumon. 2007.
http://etica.uahurtado.cl/historizarelpasadovivo/es_contenido.php.
- Taracena Arriola, Arturo. "Historia, Memoria, Olvido, Conflicto Armado y Violaciones de los Derechos Humanos: Los Avatares de la Comisión de Esclarecimiento Histórico de Guatemala." In *Entre Historias y Memorias: Los Desafíos Metodológicos del Legado Reciente de América Latina*, edited by Maria Rosaria Stabili. Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2007.
- Taussig, Michael. *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Theidon, Kimberly. "Disarming the Subject: Remembering War and Imagining Citizenship in Peru." *Cultural Critique* 54 (Spring 2003): 67-87.
- Theidon, Kimberly. *Intimate Enemies: Violence and Reconciliation in Peru*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.
- Tischler Visquerra, Sergio. *Memoria, Tiempo y Sujeto*. Guatemala City: F&G Editores, 2005.
- Tilley, Jennifer. *Seeing Indians: A Study of Race, Nation, and Power in El Salvador*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005.
- Todd, Molly. *Salvadorans by Flight: Peasants and Citizen Action on the El Salvador-Honduras Border, 1960-1990*. PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2007.
- Todd, Molly. *Beyond Displacement: Campesinos, Refugees, and Collective Action in the Salvadoran Civil War*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *Hope and Memory: Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. Translated by David Bellos. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Tomuschat, Christian. "Clarification Commission in Guatemala." *Human Rights Quarterly* 23 (2001): 233-58.
- Tonkin, Elizabeth. *Narrating Our Past: The Social Construction of Oral History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Torres, M. Gabriela. "The Paper Trails of Counterinsurgency Violence: The Documented Design and Implementation of Political Violence in Guatemala, 1976-1984." PhD diss., York University, 2004.
- Torres-Rivas, Edelberto. "Guatemala: La Memoria Histórica a Prueba, Reflexiones sobre la Muerte, la Verdad y el Olvido." *Diálogo* 1 (1999).

- Torres-Rivas, Edelberto and Gabriel Aguilera Peralta. *Desde el Autoritarismo a la Paz*. Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales: Guatemala, 1998.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995.
- Tula, María Teresa. *Hear My Testimony: María Teresa Tula, Human Rights Activist of El Salvador*. Translated and edited by Lynn Stephen. Boston: South End Press, 1994.
- UNICEF. "At a Glance: Guatemala." Last modified 26 December 2013.
http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/guatemala_statistics.html.
- UNESCO. "Integral Family Literacy." Last modified 10 February 2012.
<http://www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/?menu=16&programme=94>.
- Vázquez, Félix. *La Memoria como Acción Social: Relaciones, Significados e Imaginario*. Barcelona: Ediciones Paidós Ibericos, S.A., 2001.
- Vásquez, Lucio (Chiyo) and Sebastián Escalón Fontan. *Siete Gorrones*. San Salvador: Ediciones Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen, 2011.
- Vela Castañeda, Manolo. "Guatemala, 1954: Las Ideas de la Contrarevolución." *Foro Internacional* 45, no. 1 (2005): 89-114.
- Vela Castañeda, Manolo, ed. *Guatemala: La Infinita Historia de las Resistencia*. Guatemala City: Secretaría de la Paz, 2013.
- Vela Castañeda, Manolo. "Memorias de una Batalla: Guatemala." Unpublished manuscript.
- Vela Castañeda, Manolo, Alexander Sequén-Mónce, and Hugo Antonio Solares, eds. *El Lado Oscuro de la Eterna Primavera: Violencia, Criminalidad y Delincuencia en la Guatemala de Post-guerra*. Guatemala City: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, 2001.
- Verdeja, Ernesto. *Unchopping a Tree: Reconciliation in the Aftermath of Political Violence*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009.
- Verdery, Katherine. *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Viejo-Rose, Dacia. "Memorial Functions: Intent, Impact and the Right to Remember." *Memory Studies*. 4, no. 4 (2011): 465-80.
- Villa-Vicencio, Charles and William Verwoerd, eds. *Looking Back, Reaching Forward: Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2000.

- Vieytez Ruan, Margot. "El Significado de un Archivo para la Historia." *ContraCultura*. 4 October 2013. <http://www.contracultura.com.sv/el-significado-de-un-archivo-para-la-historia>.
- Villarán, Julio. "Calderón Sol Satisfecho con Cierre de Tutela Legal: 'El Arzobispo Ha Dado un Paso Positivo.'" *La Página*. 4 October 2013. <http://www.lapagina.com.sv/nacionales/87677/2013/10/04/Calderon-Sol-satisfecho-con-cierre-de-Tutela-Legal-El-Arzobispo-ha-dado-un-paso-positivo->.
- Wagner, William G. "*Aquí No Pasó Nada*: Terror, Remembrance, and Healing in a Guatemalan 'Green Zone.'" PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 2009.
- Weisbart, Caren. "Beyond Recognition: Alternative Rights-Realizing Strategies in the Northern Quiche Region of Guatemala." 2012. <http://www.yorku.ca/cerlac/Weisbart.pdf>.
- Weld, Kirsten A. "Reading the Politics of History in Guatemala's National Police Archives." PhD diss., Yale University, 2010.
- Weld, Kirsten A. "Dignifying the *Guerrillero*, Not the Assassin: Rewriting a History of Criminal Subversion in Postwar Guatemala." *Radical History Review* 113 (2012): 35-54.
- Weyeneth, Robert R. "The Power of Apology and the Process of Historical Reconciliation." *The Public Historian* 23, no. 3 (2001): 9-38.
- White, Hayden. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.
- Wilkinson, Daniel. *Silence on the Mountain: Stories of Terror, Betrayal, and Forgetting in Guatemala*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002.
- Wilkinson, Tracy. "Salvadoran President Criticizes U.N. Report: Politics: Cristiani Hints He Will Ignore Some Reform Proposals, Including Judicial Overhaul, and Repeats Call for Amnesty." *Los Angeles Times*. 19 March 1993.
- Winter, Jay. "The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the 'Memory Boom' in Contemporary Historical Studies." <http://www.ghi-dc.org/publications/ghipubs/bu/027/b27winterframe.html>.
- Winter, Jay. *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: the Great War in European Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Winter, Jay and Emmanuel Sivan, eds. *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Wolf, Sonja. "Subverting Democracy: Elite Rule and the Limits to Political Participation in Post-War El Salvador." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 41 (2009): 429-65.

- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. *Forging Democracy from Below: Insurgent Transitions in South Africa and El Salvador*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Wright, Thomas C. *State Terrorism in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and International Human Rights*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007.
- Yagenova, Simona V. and Mario Castañeda, eds. *Guatemala: Una Aproximación a las Luchas Sociales del 2007*. Guatemala: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, 2008.
- Yagenova Simona V., Kajkok (Máximo) Ba Tiul, Jeannette E Ascencio, and Byron Garoz. *Los Movimientos Sociales Frente al Estado, la Democracia y los Partidos Políticos*. Guatemala City: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, 2009.
- Yerushalmi, Yosef Hayim. "Reflexiones Sobre el Olvido." In *Usos del Olvido: Comunicaciones al Coloquio de Royaumont*, edited by Yosef H. Yerushalmi, Nicole Loraux, Hand Mommsen, Jean-Claude Milner, and Gianni Vattimo. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nueva Vista, 1989.
- Young, James. *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Zalaquett, José. "Balancing Ethical Imperatives and Political Constraints: The Dilemma of New Democracies Confronting Human Rights Violations." *Hastings Law Journal* 43 (1991-1992): 1425-38.
- Zalaquett, José. " 'No Hay Mañana sin Ayer': Análisis de la Propuesta del Presidente Lagos sobre Derechos Humanos." *Estudios Públicos* 92 (Spring 2003): 29-75.
- Zalaquett, José. "La Reconstrucción de la Unidad Nacional y el Legado de Violaciones de los Derechos Humanos." *Perspectivas* 2 (1999): 385-405.
- Zemon Davis, Natalie and Randolph Starn. "Introduction." *Representations*, Special Issue: "Memory and Countermemory" 26 (1989): 1-6.
- Zepeda Herrera, Juan Orlando. *Perfiles de la Guerra en El Salvador*. San Salvador: New Graphics, 2008.
- Zilberg, Elana. "Gangster in Guerrilla Face: A Transnational Mirror of Production between the USA and El Salvador." *Anthropological Theory* 7, no. 1 (2007): 37-57.
- Zúñiga Núñez, Mario. "Heridas en la Memoria: La Guerra Civil Salvadoreña en el Recuerdo de Niñez de un Pandillero." *Historia Crítica* 40 (2010): 60-83.

Zur, Judith. *Violent Memories: Mayan War Widows in Guatemala*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998.